

Ties that Bond

by HardWrapping

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Summary: When Alvin the Treacherous plans to take over the Highlands, Berk offers to help. But the bad blood between Vikings and Highlanders leads to a rather shaky alliance. Can Hiccup and Merida help their people get over their bad history and work together for the sake of them all.

1. All on the Table

Merida aimed carefully at the target across the field. The three lords stood by and watched as the princess tried to focus. "Give it up lass, not even you can make from this distance." Ian said as he leaned against a nearby tree. Boyd stood beside him giving a blank stare at a butterfly. Bart on the other hand watched closely seeing if the princess could really make such a shot.

The red head closed one of her eyes and stared a bit longer before releasing her grip on the arrow. It flew through the air before piercing the middle of the target. Merida smiled and turned towards the young lords. "Bullseye!" She said spinning her bow in her hands. "Would any of ye boys like to try and top that?" She asked.

Ian held his hands up defeated. "Okay princess, your made your point. I admit it. You're the best archer in the land." He said bitterly. He hated losing, but he had to admit the girl had skills. Boyd nodded in agreement as Bart said something that was completely lost to them all. Given that he was smiling and nodding as he said it, Merida assumed it was a compliment.

"Um, thanks ye big lug." She said giving him a light punch on the arm. Since he didn't argue or complain, she guessed she must have got it right. She looked to Ian for conformation but he simply shrugged. He was just as lost to the boy's speech as she was. "Anyone up for a little sword play?" She asked.

Ian rubbed his hands together. "Now that's something I definitely have ye beat in!" He said eagerly. Boyd still seemed out of it and Bart nodded in agreement. They began heading towards the training grounds, but suddenly heard something. It was a loud horn. Ian looked confused. "What's that then?" He asked looking towards the castle.

Merida looked up as well. "Ah think that's the horn me da uses to signal for enemy attacks. But that can't be. I haven't heard that thing since I was a wee lass." She said. No enemy had ever managed to get to castle DunBroch. It was right smack dab in the middle of the highlands. To even get close to it you would have needed to get past one of the three clans.

Suddenly they saw Queen Elinor approaching them. "Children! Children, you must get to the castle immediately!" She yelled.

"Ma, what's going on?" Merida asked.

Elinor quickly began shoving her daughter towards the direction of the castle. "There is no time to explain! You must hurry back to the castle immediately, all of you, go!" She instructed.

They all looked at each other clearly confused, but began making their way to the castle with haste. Once there they saw that the guards were all hurrying to positions. Warriors were standing by with swords and shields in hand, arches were positioned at the top of the castle walls, everyone was armed to the teeth. "Ma! What in the world is going on?!" Merida asked.

"Vikings!" The Queen answered before hurrying the children inside.

Ian suddenly stopped. "Vikings? Are you serious?" He asked with an angered expression. "Did they nae get enough of us the first time we sent them running away like the savages they are?!"
>"How did they get here? Wouldn't we have gotten words from one of the other clans?!" Merida asked confused. Even if the Lords weren't there, the defenses would still be at the ready. Word should have been sent for the return of such a serious enemy.<p>

"How they got here is not important! We need to get you all to safety right now!" Elinor said.

Ian turned around and pulled out his sword. "With all due respect milady, I will nae turn tail and run from some Viking scum! If they want a fight that's what we'll give em!" He said heading back towards the gate.

Merida armed her bow. "Aye! We'll send em packing just like before!"

Elinor quickly grabbed her daughter arms. "Yer not going anywhere! Yer the princess and the rest of ye are the next heads of your clans! Protecting you children is top priority!"

"But we can fight!" Ian argued.

"Ah know you can fight, but today is nae the day for it!" Elinor said. "Now all of you, get inside noo!" She ordered. Merida frowned

as Boyd and Bart ran into the main hall. "Merida, Ian!"

"Aye mom." Merida said as she reluctantly followed the young lords.

Ian looked back and then cursed under his breath. He followed after Merida. "You'll get your chance to fight, I promise." Elinor assured as she closed the door behind them.

Meanwhile outside the Fergus and the Lords stood in front of the castle gates. Fergus made his way to the front of the large group of warriors and then looked up at Lord Macintosh who sat at the top of the castle wall with bow and arrow in hand. "How many are there?" Fergus shouted.

Macintosh looked closely. "Not many from what I can tell. Definitely not enough for an army." He confirmed. Fergus grunted. They must have sent a small force so they would go unnoticed. If the clans hadn't met together for the games today, they would have been completely unprepared.

"One of them approaches!" Macintosh yelled.

Fergus looked up confused. "Just one?"

"Aye!" Macintosh confirmed.

"Is he armed?" Fergus asked.

"Nae! Not even a shield!"

Fergus glared at the door. This wasn't right. Vikings may have been savages, but they were not stupid. They had to be planning something. Suddenly there was a knock on the gates. Everyone stood in silence. After a few more moments of silence, Fergus spoke. "Open it." He ordered.

The two guards nodded before pulling the locks of the gates and then slowly opening them. The arches all took aim and the guards prepared to attack as the single man walked through the gates. He looked around and then smirked. "I see I'm not exactly receiving a warm welcome."

Fergus glared. "Stoick the Vast. Ah suppose ah should consider myself honored ye showed yer ugly mug here in person. Though fer sure ye would send one of yer dogs to do yer dirty work."

Stoick frowned. "I'm no coward Bear King. I'm here to talk to face to face Man to man."

"We have nothin' to talk aboot with you Viking animals." Fergus spat.

"Not even if it involves DunBroch burning to the ground?" Stoick asked.

"Is that ah threat?" Fergus asked angrily.

"It's a warning." Stoick said glaring back the the bear king. "Look, I only brought a small number of people. We're all unarmed. Why don't

you let us inside so we can explain."

Fergus threw his head back and laughed. "Ha, ye actually expect us to believe that? For all we know yer people could be readying to attack as we speak!"

"If we wanted to burn Dunbroch to the ground, we would have done it by now." Stoick stated bluntly. "The only reason we haven't taken the highlands by now is because we have a much bigger problem to deal with."

Fergus looked furious. "Haven't taken-? Did ya nae remember who sent yoo sorry lot back to yer little islands in the first place?!" He shouted.

"Look Fergus, personally I could care less whether you trust me or not! I sure as hel don't trust you either! But regardless of what you believe, this place will be burned the ground along with the rest of the highlands if you don't hear what I have ta say! Now are you willing to listen or not?!" Stoick shouted back.

The two glared at each other for nearly a minute before Fergus looked up towards Macintosh. "Do their people have any weapons?" He asked.

Macintosh shook his head. "None ah can see."

He turned back to Stoick. "We'll listen to what ye have to say. But if ye or yer people try ANYTHING, we'll fill you full of arrow before ye can even draw a sword."

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><p>Merida and the young lords watched as the Great Hall filled with highland warriors, and of course, Vikings. The Vikings sat on one side of the room, but were being closely watched by the guards. "I still can't believe they managed to slip through out defenses. Even with a small group like they, they shouldn't have been able to slip through." Merida said.
"Forget how they got here. I can't believe we're even listening to these mongrels. We should have just skinned them on the spot!" Ian said twirling his sword in his hand. He was itching for one of the Vikings to make a move so he could draw first blood.

After everyone had been seated Merida looked down at the Viking leader, Stoick the Vast. Her father had talked a bit about him when he and the lords reminisced about their old war days, but he'd never gone into detail. She supposed her father didn't like pulling up the more gruesome memories of the war.

She then glanced over at the boy to Stoick's right. He was wearing a horned helmet, but other than that there was no other evidence pointing to him behind a Viking. Compared to the others, he was scrawny, frail, and weak. Merida could probably knock down with ease.

"So Stoick, what did ye come here for?" Fergus asked impatiently.

Stoick took his helmet off and placed it on the table. "I'm sure most

of us here remember the war between our people."

"Aye. Ye tried to steal out land from us." Lord Dingwall said crossing his arm.

Stoick nodded. "That we did. But you united against us and-"

"We sent yer sorry asses back to where you belong!" Ian shouted angrily.

Suddenly a young Viking stood up and glared at him. "Say that again you punk!"

Ian glared back at him before jumping over the railing and onto the table. "I'll say it a thousand times you no good scavengers!"

Before they could go any further a man reached forward and pulled the young Vikings back. "Snotlout! Calm down and keep quiet!" He shouted.

"But dad, he called us scavengers! I'm not going to let some prissy highlander punk bad mouth us!" He shouted back.

"Spiteout, keep you boy under control!" Stoick ordered.

"Ian, back off!" Lord Macintosh yelled.

"But why?! We don't have to sit here and listen to these savages! We should just gut every last one of them!"

"SIT. DOWN." Macintosh repeated more firmly.

Ian glared over at Snotloud and then put his sword away.

"Aye."

After everyone had calmed down a bit Stoick continued. "As I was saying. It's true that the clans banding together were certainly a formidable force. But make no mistake, we were prepared to combat you. We simply had bigger problems to deal with at the time." He said.

"Is that so?" Fergus asked raising an eyebrow. He wasn't sure if Stoick was telling the truth of making excuses. He was a stubborn bastard after all. Not that he had room to talk.

"It is." He said getting up. He nudged the skinny boy beside him to who quickly stood up and made his way towards the door. "I'd like to show you something." As the boy neared the door, a few of the guards prepared to stop him.

Fergus lifted his hand signaling them to let the boy go. He was interested in where this was going Besides, if they were planning a surprise attack the last person they would send for the task was this boy. He looked like he could barely lift a weapon let alone use one.

When the boy left Stoick turned towards the others. "What we're about to show you will probably be a shock, but it's not dangerous. Don't make any sudden movements or point any weapons at it, otherwise you'll spook it."

Merida, as well as every other highlander in the room looked confused. Spook what exactly? The door opened back up and the boy walked in slowly. Fergus rolled his eyes. "Look Stoick, I'm tired of waitin' for this nonsense. Would you jist..."

He stopped when he saw a large black figure making it's way into the room. Merida watched in shock as a huge reptile like creature, complete with a set of wings, entered into the room. The highlanders all lifted their weapons and the creature suddenly bared it's teeth and looked ready to strike. Merida quickly pulled up her own weapon ready to shoot the creature down if it attacked.

The skinny boy suddenly turned around. "Wait, everyone, please drop your weapons! You're making him uncomfortable."

Fergus kept a tight grip on his sword. "What in the blazes is that thing?" He asked glaring at Stoick. Was this part of their plans? To bring these beast here to slaughter them? He knew he shouldn't have trusted these backstabbing animals! He prepared to lunge at the beast, but Stoick lifted his hand.

"Don't do that." He warned.

"King Fergus, I swear to you that he is not dangerous. He's just perceiving you as a threat. Just drop your weapon and it'll be fine." The boy assured.

Fergus looked at the beast skeptically and then slowly placed his weapon on the table. "Put em down." He ordered to everyone else. The highlanders all looked at each other in confusion. "I said drop your weapons." He ordered.

Everyone slowly sheathed or dropped their weapons. The second they had the fierceness in the creatures eyes vanished. It was replaced with a more innocent, curious look. "There you go bud." The boy said patting the creature on the head.

>"Okay Stoick, what the devil is that thing?" Fergus asked still eyeing the creature.<p>

"That Fergus, is a dragon. They've been infesting Berk for years, but around the time the clans united the infestation spiked. We couldn't deal with waging war with you while we had these rascals nipping at our heels." Stoick explained.

Fergus rubbed his chin. "Is it dangerous?"

"No. All the dragons on Berk are completely tamed. They won't harm people, not without reason anyway." Stoick said. Fergus grunted. He didn't like the idea of the Vikings having an army of dragons at their disposal. This did explain how they so deep into highland territory without being detected.

"Where are the others?" Fergus asked. "The ones you rode here on."

"We have the ones we rode here on hidden in a small cave a few miles away. Don't worry, we're not planning anything." Stoick assured. "We just thought if we came flying in you'd try to shoot us down before hearing what we had to say."

Fergus nodded. "You were right. So, are ye saying that dragons are coming here to the highlands then?" He asked. He knew his arch enemy couldn't have come here to simply warn him about some overgrown reptiles.

"Sort of. Do you remember Alvin?"

Fergus looked angry. "Aye, Alvin the Treacherous. One of your scum bag allies." During the war Alvin had been the most hated of all the Vikings. Most Vikings pillaged of course, but they at least let the women and children go. Alvin on the other hand was ruthless, bloodthirsty.

"He's no ally of ours anymore. He was banished years ago." Stoick said. "He was sent to outcast island along with the other traitors. But there's a problem. Alvin has learned how to tame the dragons, and he's gathering forces."

"To take Berk?" Fergus asked with a smirk. He had to admit, the idea of Stoick coming to him for help was pretty satisfying.

"No, to take the highlands."

The highlanders all began muttering amongst themselves. "Well, looks like Alvin had finally lost his rocker. No Vikings will be able to take the highlands from us." Stoick said. "Even if they have a few little lizards with them, they don't have the man power to take us on."

"You don't understand. Many of the other Vikings tribes have already joined him, and I'm sure even more will stand with him as well."

"And why haven't yoo?" Fergus asked. "Ye tried before, and with the dragons I'm sure ye THINK all the Vikings would be able to take the highlands from us easily."

>"I have no doubt that we could. But I'm not stupid Fergus. Alvin would betray us the minute we stepped foot on the battlefield. Even if the prize was the highlands, he wouldn't be able to let the feud between us go." Stoick said balling his fist up.<p>

Fergus looked at him curiously. "So, the enemy of yer enemy is yer friend?"

"Basically. I've convinced a few other tribes to stand against Alvin, and we agreed that the best move would be to aline ourselves with you."

Fergus nodded in thought. "Ah see. And what would ye ask for in return?"

"The only thing we would ask is that you allow us and the other tribes who've agreed to join us to live on your land."

There were mutters among the room. The highlanders thought the proposal was crazy. Surely Fergus would not allow such a long time enemy to simply move onto their homeland. The Vikings also seemed against this idea. Their homes had always been on the seas. How could they suddenly up and move onto enemy territory.

Fergus glared at Stoick. "And why should ah even consider yer proposal?"

"The highlands have more than enough land to support the tribes and then some, and it'd be pretty damn hard to help you fight a war when we're a week's trip away." Stoick argued.

"Are ye saying ye would be willing to serve under the rules of the Kingdom?" Fergus asked.

"We'd be willing to negotiate. You have to understand, there are certain traditions we're just not willing to give up."

"What? Like pillaging and burning down villages?" Merida asked. They all looked up at the red head. "Ye cannae seriously bein considering this, can ye da? They're probably just tryin to gain yer trust so they can attack ya from our home front!"

"Merida!" Elinor said grabbing the girls arm.

"No ma! I will nae let some Viking savages smooth talk their way into the kingdom!"

"Ah! Why should we trust them?! Whether it be Alvin or this lot here, their all the same! Backstabbing traitorous scum!" Ian yelled.

The dragon suddenly sensed the hostility in the room and bared it's teeth again. It growled up at Ian and Merida who backed up slightly. "Oy! Ye keep that thing under control!" Fergus yelled.

"Why don't you keep that redheaded whelp under control!" One of the Viking shouted back.

"That whelp is my daughter ye bastard!"

Everyone began yelling and shouting at one another. Merida glared down at the Vikings as her mother began scold her about how much trouble she had just called. She wasn't paying attention though. She was focusing on the scrawny boy who was trying to sooth the dragon.

He turned around and began shouting. "Hey! Wait a second, I have something to say!" Everyone ignored him and he sighed. Suddenly the dragon opened it's mouth and let out an ear shattering roar. Everyone covered their ears as the beast bellowed. When it finished the boy patted it on the head. "Thanks bud."

He turned around and faced Fergus. "You're majesty, if I may say something?"

"And who exactly are ye?" Fergus asked still trying to get the echoes of the black beasts roar out of his ears.

Stoick patted the boy on the back. "Fergus, this here is my boy Hiccup."

"Hiccup?" Fergus asked with a smirk. The other highlanders, and even a few Vikings, broke out into laughter. "Were all the manly names taken boy?"

"Yeah, I know..." Hiccup said sighing. At least he had broken some of the tension in the room. "I know long ago our people were at war, but don't you think we can find a way to get past that for the sake of everyone here? I mean the clans here were at war a long time ago, but you united for the greater good right?"

"Aye boy, we united against YOU." Fergus reminded. "Ah see where your coming from boy, ah really do. But ye can't think a few fancy can undo years of war and bloodshed do ye?"

Hiccup sighed. "Look, I'm much to young to remember anything about the war or whatever bad blood is boiling between you and my father. But I do know about Alvin. I know he's willing to stoop to any level to get what he wants. If we don't unite against him, he WILL take the highlands. And he won't stop there either."

"He's not interested in trying to take care or get more land for his tribe or his people. He's insane, he's twisted, and he's power crazy. He'll keep on trying to expand, and I think he's crazy enough to try and take over the world if he can. I know you don't trust us, but Alvin needs to be stopped here. If he wins, we ALL lose."

He took off his helmet and then dropped it on the table. "I'm asking you to at least consider working together with us so we can make a stand again him. This helmet is half of my mother's breast plate. I'm willing to swear an alliance over it."

Fergus looked at Hiccup suspiciously. Something about the boy's face told him he was serious about this. He rubbed his chin in thought. "Ye can bring your allied tribes to our land. Ye and the rest of the residents of Berk will stay with us, so we can keep an eye on ya." Fergus said. "Then we'll negotiate the terms of our alliance."

Stoick reached forward and patted Hiccup on the back. "That's my boy." He said proudly.

>"By the way. Ah ain't really to comfortable about that... thing, being here. We'll make a stable for em, but OUR guards will be monitoring them at all clear?" Fergus said.<p>

"That's reasonable. But we need to have some of our tribesmen there as well. The Dragons need to be handled carefully, and we wouldn't want any accidents." Stoick said.

"Agreed."

Everyone muttered amongst themselves wondering if this shaky alliance would really hold. Ian balled his fist up angrily. "Ah, I don't believe we're teaming up with those filthy outlanders. Yer dad must be going mad if he thinks we can trust them." He said looking at the read.

Merida was staring down at Hiccup curiously. He was leading his dragon outside and away from the all ruckus. She had to admit, she was a little impressed on how he'd handled the situation. "What do you think of that one?" She asked.

Ian looked down at Hiccup as he walked out of the door. "Him? He's a scrawny wimp. If those other Vikings are really attacking he'll be

nothing but a toothpick. Why?"

She shrugged. "Just curious. He doesn't seem like the Viking sort to me."

Ian grunted and began walking off. "He's probably just as treacherous and backstabbing as the rest of his kind. C'mon guys." He said walking off. Bart and Boyd followed him.

Merida kept staring down towards the door where Hiccup had left. He seemed... interesting. She would keep an eye on him. "Merida, you comin?" Ian called.

"Aye, I'm comin." Merida said going after the young lords.

2. Wicked Skrills

The change that had taken place over three next weeks was hard to adjust to for pretty much everyone. The Vikings had moved into a small campsite not far from the castle. There were guards always on the ready just in case they had tried anything funny. The first few days were filled with arguments and small scuffles, but things were starting to settle down. Still, there was a thick tension in the air felt by both sides.

Something that had everyone on edge was, of course, the dragons. A stable had been built for them, and while most of the beast found it a bit stuffy, it was suitable. The real problem was keeping the creatures calm. They were in a new place full of unfamiliar faces. The highlander guards didn't help either. They had no idea how to keep tabs on the giant reptiles.

"Woah! Calm down you stupid beast!" One of the highlander guards yelled as they pulled on the muzzle of Monstrous Nightmare. The dragon began thrashing about easily tossing the guard aside. More of the guards ran over to the scene and began grabbing at its muzzle. They tried to restrain it, but they were clearly no match for the creatures brute strength.

It shook it's long neck around flinging the guards away. The Nightmare suddenly lit it's body on fire. With one shake of it's head the charred muzzle fell to the ground. It roared loudly and then began stomping towards one of the guards. He reached and snatched his sword off the ground. He held it up towards to defend himself.

Suddenly the door to the stable opened. "What's going on?" Hiccup asked looking around. He saw the guards flung about everyone and then looked up at the Monstrous Nightmare. It stormed over towards the guard, but Hiccup stepped forward and held his hands up. "Whoa there, calm down pal!"

The Monstrous Nightmare stopped and the flames on it's body extinguished. Hiccup slowly stepped forward and petted it on the nose. "No one is going to hurt you. I promise." He said in a soothing voice. The ferocious look in the Nightmare's eyes left and it began making a low growl. "I know it's a little cramped in here, but we all have to adjust. Just bare with it a little while."

He led the Nightmare back to its cell and the guards quickly close to door behind it. Hiccup sighed and turned towards the guards. "Look, I know your not used to dealing with dragons, but you can't treat them roughly. They respond to hostility with hostility. If you just try and shove them around everywhere their going to shove back. Especially Hookfang."

One of the guards frowned at him and adjusted his helmet. "Well, what do ye expect us to do? It ain't like we have any experience with the blasted devils." He said with a snort. None of the highlander residents could understand how anyone could view these things as pets. These Vikings had been living like animals for so long that they had identified with them.

Hiccup opened his mouth to say something, but suddenly a Gronkle came flying around the corner dragging a guard behind it. He sighed and then ran after it. Merida and the Young lords watched the scene from afar. "Look at em. I can't believe that scrawny wimp is supposed to be the hero of berk." Ian said chuckling.

Merida frowned as she watched the boy bring the Gronkle to a stop. After a few moments of relaxing the rough skinned reptile he led it back to it's place in the stable. "It's nae the boy that's the problem. It's the control he has over those things. What if he just ordered them all ta takeover the castle. We'd be torn to shreds." Merida said sighing.

She was honestly wondering what her dad was thinking. Making an alliance was all fine and well, but with the Vikings? It didn't seem like a wise decision. "I dannae know. If he wanted to do something like that don't you think he would have by noo? I mean he's had a thousand chances to do so." Boyd said scratching his head.

"Their probably just waiting fer Alvin and his goons to get here so they can have a sure kill. But I will nae let that happen. The minute they try turn against us, I'll slit their throat with my blade." He said twirling his sword in his hand. "Hel, I'll be the first Highlander to slay a dragon." He said confidently.

"Or the first Highlander ta be killed by one." Merida said with a smirk. Ian narrowed his eyes at her but decided to ignore the comment. She glanced back down at the stable. Whenever the boy had left, the stable was full of roars and commotion, but his simple presence seemed to put them at ease. There must have been some sort of trick to taming these things.

Truthfully, Merida was very interested in the beasts. She didn't think they had anything on her Angus of course, but they were something new and strange to her. To avoid as many accidents as possible, only the guards assigned to the stable were allowed to get close. This of course made Merida even more curious. She had to see these things up close.

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The lords and Viking chiefs walked out of the great hall mumbling amongst themselves. So far negotiations had been going fairly well. They had hit a few snags here and there, but they had slowly worked their way past every problem so far. Fergus sat back in his chair and

let a sigh of relief escape. He never thought reasoning with Vikings would be so difficult. But with their traditions and of course the dragons, things were more complicated than he'd thought.

"Feeling the pressure Fergus?" He looked up and saw Stoick standing next to him. He placed two mugs of ale and then pulled out a chair before taking a seat. "I know what yer feeling. Being a leader ain't no joke." He said sliding him one of the mugs.

Fergus grabbed the mug and took a swig before slamming it back down on the table. "Aye. It's much harder than ah ever thought possible. Still, things have been going a lot better than aye expected ah suppose." He said scratching his head.

In the past weeks Stoick and Fergus had began growing a mutual respect for one another. They knew if this alliance was going to have a chance at working, then they would have to lead their people by example. Fergus ruled over the lords, and Stoick held a lot of respect from the other chiefs. If they could at least tolerate each other, their people would as well.

"Got that right. I thought fer sure we'd have a murder on our hands by now." He said before taking a drink from his own mug. He set it down and then turned towards Fergus. "I been meaning to talk to ya about something. It's about the dragons."

Fergus sighed. "They been givin my guards trouble all week. Ah have to admit Stoick, your people really are tough to have gotten a handle on those beasts." Fergus admitted.

"Believe me, we had our fair share of trouble with them to." Stoick assured. "My boy has told me that the dragons are a little uncomfortable in the stables."

Fergus looked confused. "What? But that crackpot Gobber is the one who built it. And I thought yer boy Hiccup was the one who said it would do?"

Stoick shook his head. "Aye, it will do. I mean it could be a little bigger, but it's suitable. It's just that back home the dragons are used to getting a little fresh air. We take em out for a bit of riding so they can stretch their legs and spread their wings. But they haven't been out in weeks. Their getting a little grumpy. I doubt my boy will be able to keep them calm much longer."

Fergus sighed. He could see where Stoick was coming from. No animal, whether it be a dog or a dragon liked being cooped up for long. But the idea of dragon flying around Dunbroch didn't sit well with him. If this whole thing really was a facade they would have a perfect opportunity to attack. This seemed unlikely to Fergus who figured if they were going to try anything they wouldn't have waited so long.

The lords however were still skeptical, and he couldn't blame them. Even he still held a hint of distrust towards their new allies, and he was sure Stoick and the other chiefs did not completely trust them either. Trust in your allies was something necessary to any leader. But it was also something that needed to be earned.

"I'll talk to the other lords about it. But you realize even if I

convince them to agree, certain precautions will have to be taken." Fergus reminded.

"I understand. But keep in mind that when Alvin strikes, it'll be on the backs of dragons, and we will need our own to even have a chance against him. We did have a dragon training academy back on Berk. Perhaps it might be a good idea to start one here. The dragons can get a little freedom and your people can get used to them."

Fergus rubbed his chin. If they learned how to tame dragons themselves, any chance of the reptiles being used against them would drastically decrease. Surely the lords would be willing to agree with that. "Sounds like a good idea. I'll run it by the lords later on tonight."

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Hiccup sat in the mess hall and poked at the food on his plate. The woman who had served it to him told him it was boiled sheep stomach. It sounded disgusting, but seeing as he'd eaten raw regurgitated fish before, he might as well give it a shot. He took a smile bit and then looked surprised. It actually wasn't that bad.

>"Hey." He felt a punch on the arm and then looked up to see Astrid, Fishlegs, and the others all beginning to sit around him. "I heard you've been pretty busy lately." Astrid said with a smirk.<p>

Hiccup and Astrid had broken up some time ago. They both agreed that the relationship just wasn't going anywhere. At first it had been very awkward, for them and the entire group. But they managed to get to a point where they had become close friends.

He rubbed his arm. "Yeah. The guards just aren't used to dealing with dragons. The dragons aren't really used to all the new faces either."

Snotlout snorted. "Well what do you expect. Highlanders are soft. They don't have what it takes to get a handle on something like a dragon." He said grabbing his turkey leg. He took a bite out of it before continuing. "Hookfang would even think of attacking me."

Tuffnut laughed. "Didn't Hookfang attack you just the other day?"

"No, he was PLAYING. Big difference."

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Well, Snotlout is right about one thing. These Highlanders are way too soft. From what I've seen they wouldn't last a second against any decent warrior." She said looking over towards a table where the princess and the young lords sat. Ian was showing off some of his sword skills. "Their way to clean. It's all flare and no fire."

Fishlegs shrugged. "Well, war is a numbers game. There really wasn't much else that we could do besides align ourselves with them." He said.

"Well there won't be much point in numbers if they all run away the first time they see a dragon." Snotlout said chuckling. "I mean, did you see the king when Toothless walked in? He looked like he was

going to wet his pants."

"I guess the 'Bear King' and his cronies just aren't up for dealing with dragons." Ruffnut said smirking.

"Tell me about it. I mean do you see their princess? She was aiming that arrow at Toothless like she actually knew how to use it. Can you imagine her slaying a dragon when she can't even slay her own hair." Astrid added.

The young Vikings all chuckled amongst themselves, and it didn't go unnoticed by the princess or the young lords. "Look at those haughty savages. I see they have no problem making themselves at home." Ian said glaring at them.

Bart reached over and plucked his food off his plate before quickly stuffing it in his mouth. Ian turned back around, saw his plate, and then glared up at the giant who just gave a shy smile. Merida laughed at the two and then looked back over at the table. "They certainly donnae leave the best impression on ya. Rough lookin group they are."

Ian laughed. "Their just as ugly as the beasts they ride."

>Bart said something that, once again, flew over all their heads. Boyd turned towards them and stared curiously. "Ah don't know. Ah donnae think the two blonde lasses are too bad on the eyes." He said smiling towards them.<p>

Ian looked over and rubbed his chin. "Well, they do have a few rough looking women folk, but ah suppose they donnae look too bad." He said eyeing the blonde with the pony tail.

Merida rolled her eyes. "They'd probably kill ya for looking at em wrong." She muttered poking her food around with her fork.

Ian smiled slyly. "I think someone is a little jealous that their not the only girl on the block anymore." He said elbowing her.

She elbowed him back, only much harder. "Please, like ah would be jealous of some Viking girls. I bet they couldn't even string a bow, much less use one." She said. "Ah am more interest in those beast they ride. I mean they got nothing on an Clydesdale, but ain't ye a little curious on what it's like to whiz through the air like that?"

"Nae really." Boyd said snorting. "Ah mean, I trip over me own two feet when I'm on the ground. Hate ta see what I'd do in the air."

Ian began eating what was left of his food. "Ah got to say, I'm a bit curious too. What do ya say tonight we visit the stable and mount some of those uglies?"

Merida smiled. "I'm in."

"But we don't even know how ta ride em." Boyd pointed out.

Ian waved his hand. "Aw yer worrying too much. If those brainless Vikings can do it, then it should take us all but two minutes." He said.

"I don't know about this..." Boyd said worriedly. Usually he followed the others without a word, but that was because there was only so much trouble they could get into. But this seemed crazy, even for them.

Merida elbowed him. "Oh, don't be such a worry wart. We'll be fine ye big baby."

Boyd sighed. "Alright then. But how are we even going to get inside?"

"Tonight Sam and Dugan are on duty. They almost always fall asleep on watch. When they doze off we'll sneak by and check em out." Merida said.

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Hiccup walked down the halls of the castle rubbing his eyes. He had spent most of the day working on a new modification for Toothless tail. While most of the Vikings weren't allowed in the castle, Fergus had given him special permission to use the smithy. It wasn't like he could do any harm from there anyway.

He hadn't managed to complete Toothless new tail fin, but he didn't care. He would finish it tomorrow. Right now though all he wanted to do was to hit his bed and drift off to sleep. Just as he was turning the corner a figure ran out and crashed into him. He fell back onto the ground hitting the back of his head. He would have said ow, but he was to tired. In fact, he was tempted to just fall asleep like this. But he had to excuse himself to whoever he just bumped into.

"Ow..."

Hiccup's head immediately shot up and he found himself staring at a mass of red fiery hair. He gulped as he realized that this was the princess. This was terrible. He had just knocked over the princess of Scotland! This meant three weeks of hard work had just gone down the drain! He had probably just sparked a war!

The redhead looked up with a glare. Who in the world was up this late at night? She saw Hiccup who gave a nervous smile. "What are ye doing in here? I thought da said that only the chiefs were allowed in the castle, and only in the day?"

Hiccup quickly made his way to his feet and offered her a hand. "Oh man, I am so sorry! I had no idea you were coming and if I'd have known it was you I wouldn't have-"

"Stop babbling ye nervous wreck. It's not the first time ah been knocked over before." She said as she pushed herself up and dusting her dress off. She looked the boy up and down. He was even scrawnier up close. "Anyway, Ah don't care about that. I'm asking ye why your in the castle this late at night."

Hiccup looked her over. He had seen her a few times before, but thought it wise to avoid her. She was a princess after all, and he wasn't the most... graceful guy. One wrong slip up and she want probably have his head on a platter. And judging by the way her

father acted, she could have it. But seeing her up close he could see all her features.

Her curly red hair went in every direction, her round face, and blue eyes that shined like sapphires. She was really pretty. Suddenly Merida snapped her fingers shaking him from his thoughts. "Hey, I'm asking ye a question you numbskull! Pay attention!"

He shook his head and then fumbled to find the right words. "Your father the smithy- I mean the smithy's permission- " Merida looked at him with a raised eyebrow. She had actually thought this one was smarter than the other Vikings for a while. Hiccup stopped and took a deep breath collecting his thoughts. "Your father gave me permission to use the smithy."

Merida looked at him suspiciously for a few seconds. Hiccup looked worried. Was she going to tell her father? King Fergus had given him permission, but he'd clearly lost track of time, and he wasn't sure if being here this late was pushing it. "That so? Normally I'd be suspicious of a stranger walkin around the castle at night but you... you don't seem like you could do any harm."

Not sure whether or be relieved or offended he decided to take simply it as a compliment. "Um... thank you your milady." He said rubbing his arm.

Merida rolled her eyes. "Don't call me yer lady, and don't thank me. Just scramble on out of here before ah change me mind." She said shooing him away.

"Right, right..." He turned to walk off but then stopped for a moment. He then turned back around. "Wait a minute, what are you doing up this late?"

Merida looked a bit surprised. She hadn't expected him to question her. "Wha?"

Hiccup saw the look on her face and was sure he'd made a mistake. "If you don't me asking of course!" He said not believing he thought to question royalty.

Upon seeing Hiccup's nervous state, Merida regained her composure. She had no idea why she had panicked. She was the princess here, she had all the say in this situation! "Well, ah DO indeed mind ye asking! It's not really any of yer business! Now get out of here before ah change my mind!" She snapped.

"Right, of course!" He ran off as fast as his legs could carry him. He looked back and saw the girl simply standing there. She was probably up to something mischievous. At least based off how the guards were always talking about her. Still, curious as he was, it wasn't like it was any of his business. So long as it didn't effect him or the tribe, he couldn't care less.

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"What took ye so long?" Ian asked crossing his arms. He and the other two young lords stood in front of the castle a few yards away from the stable. The guards had fallen asleep some time ago, but they had

to wait on their redheaded princess to arrive.

Merida sighed. "Ah know, ah know. Ah just ran into that scrawny Viking lad. He was up wielding something or another. Ah had to shake him before I came along." She explained. "Well, why don't we go mount some dragons then?" She said smiling

They made their way over towards the stable and saw the two guards who, just as Merida predicted, were lost in a deep slumber. Ian slowly opened the door and the others crept in. He followed them making sure to close the door gently. One inside the group looked around in awe.

There were dozens of dragon, all different shapes in sizes. Luckily they were all sleeping. One pen held a number of small dragons, no bigger than cats. Bart saw a baulking dragon with bumpy rough skin. Ian stopped when he saw handful that that two heads. "Man, these things are ugly." He said grimacing.

"Ah don't know. They do nae look any uglier than ye do." Merida joked.

"Check that one out." Boyd said as he pointed over towards one of the pens. It was a black dragon that slightly resembled the one Chief Stoick rode. It's head was different however, and it was covered in spikes. "Ah wonder why this one is all shackled up?"

The others walked over and saw that he was right. Unlike the others this dragon was not only muzzled, but restrained with chains. "Ah bet this is supposed to be the big bad one. Let's saddle him up and ride this bad boy then." Ian said about to enter the pen. Merida stuck her arm out stopping him. "What?" He asked.

"This one really does looked dangerous. Ah mean the boy wouldn't let any of the beast be shackled up, he did nae even like putting muzzles on them. If he restrained this one I do nae think we should mess with him." She warned.

Ian smirked. "If your scared lass, just say so."

Merida frowned. "Move." She ordered. She then pushed him aside and entered the pen. She moved slowly towards the dragon and then placed a hand on it's head. It's rought skin was covered in black scales. "It feels... different than ah imagined."

"Well, are ye gonna ride it or not?" Ian asked.

She turned back towards him and glared. "Of course I'm gonna ride it. I'm just... looking over it first." She said. She suddenly felt a small spark on her hand and quickly pulled it back. She looked down to see the dragon awake and glaring at her.

The look it gave her was much different than the others. When they moved the dragons in a few weeks back, she managed to get close to some of them. When they looked at her, it was a look of suspicion mixed with curiosity. As if they were judging them. But this one simply stared at her with fury. Like it would rip her apart the minute it got loose.

"Maybe ye shouldn't do this Merida. It does nae look too friendly."

Boyd said.

"Aye, maybe a different one would be better." Ian said. He knew he had dared her into doing this, but he wasn't going to be the one to tell king Fergus his daughter had been ripped apart by a bloodthirsty dragon right before their eyes.

Merida grew a determined look on her eyes. "Do nae be such babies just because it's given ye a nasty look. It's muzzled, it can't hurt ye." She said walking around to it's side.

She took a deep breath and then climbed up on top of it's back. She shuffled around a bit trying to get comfortable. This was so much different than riding Angus. She reached down and began unhooking the dragon's restraints. The dragon waited patiently until the last chain was undone.

The minute it was free it began thrashing about in an attempt to throw Merida off it's back. The red headed princess quickly reached down and grabbed one of the spikes on it's back. She hung on for dear life as the dragon kept rampaging. "Whoa! Settle down!" Merida shouted.

The young lords watched having no idea what to do. Ian walked over to the gate and opened the gate back up. "Merida, quick!" He yelled. Just as Merida was about to jump off and run towards the gate, the dragon turned around and rushed towards him. Ian quickly tried to push the gate closed, but the dragon easily overpowered him.

It knocked him and the other young lords over before running about the stable. The other dragons all began to wake up at the commotion. "Alright, this has gone on far enough!" Ian yelled pulling out his sword. He ran towards it, but the dragon flew upwards towards the ceiling.

Merida clung onto the reptile and braced herself. This thing was going to try and smash through the roof. The dragon suddenly opened it's mouth and Merida could feel an intense heat.

=====

Hiccup walked towards the stable stretching his arms out. He couldn't believe he had almost forgotten to say goodnight to Toothless. The Night Fury had been very fidgety since being placed in the stable, and Hiccup's constant presence was probably the only thing keeping him remotely calm. Just as he approached the door he saw two guards... sleeping.

"That's reassuring." He muttered before looking up at the already opened door. "Uh oh..." He was about to rush inside of the stable until suddenly he heard a loud explosion. He looked up and saw a dark figure seeding out of the roof of the stable. A flaming muzzle fell to the ground in front of him.

The door bursted open and he saw the young lords coming out. The guards woke up and turned to see what was going on. "What happened?!" Hiccup asked quickly.

Ian looked angry. "That blasted beast just flew off with the

princess, that's what happened! Order the damned thing back down here!" Ian ordered.

Hiccup looked up confused. "Wait, which dragon?" He asked.

"Which dragon?" Ian asked in disbelief. "It doesn't matter which one! Just bring it down!"

"I need to know what type of dragon it is if I'm going to call it down!" Hiccup snapped back.

Ian was honestly a little surprised that this wimp had snapped at him like that. He would have cut him down for speaking to him in such a manner. But given the current situation he decided to simply comply. "The black one with the spikes."

Hiccup's face went pale. "Oh no, oh no. This is not good. This is definitely not good." He said running his hands through his hair. That was the Skrill that they had just caught before moving here. Not only was it not tamed yet, but it was extremely aggressive towards people.

>"Toothless!" Hiccup yelled. The Night Fury quickly busted out of it's pen and made it's way to his partners side. Hiccup mounted the dragon and then turned towards the young lords. "Go to the campsite and tell the other riders what's happening! I may need help bringing this thing down." He ordered.<p>

Ian despised taking orders from a Viking, but he rushed off to go tell Chief Stoick. Hiccup took off on Toothless and went right after the Skrill. Merida was still clinging onto the dragon. She looked down and then immediately wished she hadn't. They were so high up. If this dragon managed to shake her off, she'd be reduced to a blood stain.

Suddenly another figure flew by. Merida looked over and saw Hiccup riding on his black dragon. He looked more serious than she had ever seen him. The Skrill looked back and spotted his pursuers before diving down and trying to lose them.

On the ground castle Dunbroch was in frenzy. How had a dragon managed to take their princess? Was this a plot of the Vikings? Had they planned this all along? "Merida!" Fergus voice boomed from the castle. He ran outside pushing past anyone foolish enough to get in his way. He spotted Stoick and then glared. "What the bloody blaze of hel happened?!" He asked angrily.

Stoick heard him and quickly turned around. "Now hold on there Fergus, before you go gettin any idea that we have something to do with this, we have no idea what's going on either! My boy is up there trying to get her down safely as well speak and his friends will be up there with him soon!" He said.

"Ye expect us to believe you?!" Lord Dingwall yelled angrily

"Are ye calling us liars?!" Gobber asked stepping forward.

Fergus shoved the two apart angrily. They didn't have time for this. "I do nae care how it happened! Ah just want me daughter back down here right noo!" He shouted.

"You want we should shoot it down?" Lord Macintosh asked.

"No, you may hit the girl!" Stoick said quickly. "Just let my boy handle it! If anyone can bring her back down safely, it's him."

Hiccup and Toothless flew only a few feet by the Skrill. No matter what twist or turn it attempted to shake them, they stayed right on it's heels. Hiccup however was face with a problem. How was he supposed to bring this thing down? He couldn't shoot it. He might risk hitting Merida.

But he had to think of something. The Skrill was fast, and he was sure the princess wouldn't be able to hang on much longer. Merida who still had a firm grip on the spikes of the Skrill felt like she was going to throw up. She was a fool for thinking this would be anything like riding a Clydesdale.

She reached forward and then grabbed one of the spikes on it's head. She pulled back attempting to slow the beast down. "Would ye stop moving to fast ye psychopath?!" She shouted. She managed to reached another hand up and grab a spike. Merida then pulled her body up so she was sitting on the beasts back.

The Skrill looked angry and then began whizzing high into the air. Merida hung out and pulled on the spikes causing it to jerk back. It flew wildly in the air as Merida kept pulling hoping to direct it towards the ground. Hiccup stayed on them closely trying to wait for a chance to snatch the princess away from it.

Eventually the Skrill stopped it's struggling and then made a dive bomb towards the ground. It looked back at Merida who simply tightened her grip. It then began spinning trying to fling her off, but she held strong. "It'll take a lot more than that to shake me off you beast!" She shouted. Seconds before hitting the ground the Skrill stretched out it's wings and began flying forward.

Merida let out a sigh of relief. She was afraid that this thing was crazy enough to actually smash into the ground. She looked down and saw the Skrill had stopped thrashing about and was actually just flying forward. Was this what it was like to ride a dragon. It was a much smoother feel than it was when riding Angus.

Had this dragon not been trying to kill her, she might have enjoyed their little flight session. "Have ye finally calmed down ya maniac?" She asked. The Skrill grunted. Merida looked down and actually patted it on the head. Was it possible that this creature was just bitter about being locked up for so long?

"Princess!" Merida looked up and saw Hiccup and Toothless hovering over her. Before Merida could say anything, Hiccup nudged Toothless side and the black dragon snatched Merida off the back of the Skrill. It tossed Merida into the air before performing a loop and catching her on it's back. "Are you okay?" Hiccup asked.

Merida shook her head and then glared at him. "Oh course I'm okay!" She snapped. She sat Toothless open his mouth and heard a loud screeching sound. "What is he doing?" She asked.

Toothless shot out a blue ball of fire with stuck the Skrill from

behind. The dragon screeched out before falling and tumbling across the ground. Hiccup and Toothless stopped next to it and Hiccup quickly dismounted. He walked over to the Skrill and looked over it. A few burn marks on it's back, but nothing serious.

He turned to check on Merida but was suddenly pushed over. "Why did ye do that?!" Merida snapped.

Hiccup looked at her confused. "Do what? Save you? I'm pretty sure your father would have my head if I didn't."

"Save me? Ah was doin fine on my own! Ah had the situation handled!" She said angrily.

"Handled?!" He shouted back. "That Skrill is a wild dragon, I haven't got a chance to tame him yet! If I didn't stop him it would have thrown you off and turned you into a pancake! You can't just go messing with an untamed dragon!" He scolded.

"I tamed it just now! And then you just snatched me away and blast it! You ruined everything!" She said crossing her arms.

Hiccup looked at her confused. "Tamed a-?! You have no idea how to tame a dragon!" He said slapping his forehead. He sighed. "Look, I don't have time for this. I have to get you back to your father and send some men to get this dragon back into the stable before it wakes up." He said as he mounted Toothless once more.

Merida scoffed. "I'm not goin anywhere with ye!"

"Buddy, would you mind?" He asked.

Toothless flew forward grabbing Merida in his arms as he did so. Merida struggled to get loose as Hiccup steered them back towards the castle. "Put me down right noo!"

"Yeah, that's totally going to happen." Hiccup said sarcasm dripping from every word. "C'mon bud, we have to get back to the castle before a war breaks out." Toothless nodded and sped towards the castle, carrying a kicking and screaming Merida along with him.

* * *

><p>AN: I know this chapter seems like a bit of a cliffhanger, but don't worry. The next one will pick up right where this left off. Anyway I hope you enjoyed it. I got the idea of using a Skrill from a guest reviewer. **

3. Training Day

"Merida!" The minute her feet had touched the ground Fergus and Elinor rushed over to check on their daughter. Elinor hugged her daughter tightly in her arms and began checking over her for any injuries. "Are ye alright child? Did that thing hurt you at all?" She asked worriedly.

The red head sighed. "I'm fine ma." She said trying to reassure her.

Stoick approached his son. "Did the Skrill get away?"

Hiccup shook his head. "I shot it down about seventy yards north of here, if we get a some men out there we should be able to recapture it before it wakes up. I think they should bring some bolos just in case though." Hiccup said.

Stoick nodded and then turned to a few of the Viking men. "Alright, you heard him! Spitelout, get a few men together and bring that thing back here before it wakes up!" He ordered.

Fergus turned towards the Viking chief with a look of disbelief on his face. "Ye want to bring that beast back here?! After it just tried to kidnap me daughter and have her fer lunch?!"

"Ah had it under control da!" Merida argued.

Hiccup jumped off Toothless and turned towards the king. "Your majesty, that thing would be more of a threat if we just let it go free. It's wild, and it knows there's food here. If we let it go it will just come back looking for food. Or even if it does leave it'll find some village and end up taking food from there."

"Aye, because ye did such a good job keeping it locked up the first time didn't ye boy!" Lord MacGuffin bellowed.

"I swear I don't know how it got out." Hiccup said confused.

Fergus stepped forward. "Look boy, ah allowed ye to bring those beasts from yer homeland, but if ye cannae control them then ah will have no problem putting them down." He said sternly.

Merida saw a look of terror grow on Hiccup's face. The very idea of having the dragons put down was something he wouldn't allow. None of the people of Berk would. But on the other hand leaving meant certain death at the hands of Alvin.

"Wait, hold on a second! I can control them, I really have no idea how it could have gotten out! Maybe I didn't secure the restraints enough or-"

"Ah let it out." Merida piped up.

Everyone suddenly stopped. "What did ye say?" Fergus asked confused. Merida noticed everyone was now staring at her and she shrunk under their gaze. She wanted to say nothing, but she couldn't let the boy take the blame for something she did, even if he was a Viking.

"Ah let it out da." She admitted. "I wanted te... ride one."

Fergus frowned and shook his head. He glared down at his daughter with fury in his eyes. "I do nae believe this! Do ye know how much trouble ye could have put yourself in child?! It could have easily killed ye if it wanted!" He said angrily.

"I had it under control da! I tamed it and-"

"Ye tamed it?! What do ye know about taming dragons?!" Elinor snapped cutting her daughter off. "Yer foolish curiosity could have gotten yoo killed this time Merida!"

"Did the lords have something to do with this?!" Fergus asked turning towards the boys.

"No, it was just me!" Merida said quickly.

Ian quickly stepped forward. "No it wasn't, it was all of us. We just wanted to see the beasts up close is all." He said trying to downplay the situation. "But I'm the one who dared Merida to ride the thing, so if anyone is going to get in trouble then it should be me."

Fergus sighed and rubbed his head. "The whole lot of ye are in trouble. But it's been a long night and ah do nae feel like havin' a shoutin' match tonight. Jist go back te the castle and go te bed."

Merida was about to say something but one glance from Fergus silenced her. Her father rarely got mad at her, he usually sided with her, but when he did she knew better than to argue. As she and the young lords made their way towards the castle they could hear the Vikings teen snickering.

"Good night your heinous." Astrid said mockingly.

"Looks like even royal kids get bossed around in the highlands." Snotlout added.

Ian glared at them but kept heading towards the castle. He would deal with them later. Everyone began heading back to bed except Fergus who was rubbing his fast exhaustedly. "The lass may be on to something ya know." Fergus turned around and saw Stoick and Gobber headed towards him. "The experience may come in handy for her."

"What da ye mean?"

"Well, maybe not 'her' per say. But the lords will be fighting in the war I assume. So will a lot of other young highlander warriors. Maybe teaching the youngsters how to ride dragons is fer the best." Gobber said wiping his nose on his arm. "You know, me and Hiccup used to-"

"Aye, the academy. Stoick was telling me about it earlier." Fergus said rubbing his head. He had discussed the matter with the lords earlier, and nobody seemed against the idea. And after what just happened at seems like at may be the wisest course of action. When can you start?"

"Tomorrow if ye want. Jist hope ye don't mind the kids wakin' up at the crack ah dawn."

Fergus smiled. "Ah like this idea already."

* * *

><p>"Welcome ta yer first day of dragon training. Here yoo will be learning how ta fight dragons, as well as tame them." Gobber said standing in front of the dragon stable. A makeshift arena had been built around it. He looked over the group of teens, Viking and Scots, and smirked. It was clear the Young lords were not use to getting up

this earlier. Still, it was interesting to see their reactions.<p>

Boyd seemed as oblivious as ever, staring off into space. Ian was clearly displeased with having to take up this early, though honestly he was a little in this so called dragon training. Bart was totally out of it, the giant practically sleeping on his feet. Merida, though just as tired as the young lords were, was clearly excited about learning to tame these beasts.

The Viking teens however, seemed fairly bored. They knew how to fight dragons, and they knew a god deal about riding and taming them as well. Why was it that they had to sit through these basic drills? "First, we'll be learning a little about fightin' em. Because we have ah few newbies, we'll take it slow." Gobber said opening up the door to the stable.

Ian looked towards the Viking teens and frowned. There was one missing. "Where's the walking fish bone?" He asked. If anyone needed training of any kind it was that string bean.

"His name is Hiccup, and he's getting some rest after dealing with the Skrill that YOU let out last night. Besides, he's the last person who needs this training. He already knows almost everything there is to know about dragons." Astrid explained. "He's called the Dragon Conquerer for a reason you know."

Merida looked shocked. "He's the Dragon Conquerer?" She said in disbelief. She'd heard a few rumors about the famed Dragon Conquerer, and she knew he hailed from the Hairy Hooligan tribe, but she never thought it was him. She just thought he was pretty handy with the beasts.

Gobber walked in and then went to a random Gronkle's stable. He opened it up and then pulled the large lizard out. "Wait ah second, aren't yoo gonna teach us somethin' first?"

"Gobber believes in learning on the job." Astrid said with a smirk.

The blacksmith released the Gronkle which sped towards the group of teens. Everyone scattered out of the way and went for their weapons. "There is one key weapon when fightin' against a dragon, which is it?" Gobber asked.

"Sword!" Ian said grabbing a blade. The minute he turned around the Gronkle slapped the sword from his hand with its tail. It swung its tail once more, but Ian jumped out of the way.

Merida had grabbed a bow and quickly notched an arrow. "Arrow!" She said with a smirk. She didn't know much about dragons, but she knew a well placed arrow could bring down any beast, no matter how big or nasty.

She fired the arrow hitting the dragon right between its eyes, but it bounced off as if it were just a stick. Merida grew wide eyed as the Gronkle growled and then breathed in preparing to hurl a ball of fire. The red head stepped back and ended up tripping as the blast came speeding towards her. She raised her hands preparing for oncoming attack.

Suddenly a blonde girl jumped in front of her blocking the blast with a shield. "Shield." Astrid answered spinning an axe in her hand.

"Correct." Gobber said.

Astrid turned towards Merida. "No offense, but the field of battle isn't exactly a place for a princess." She said as the Gronkle rushed towards her.

Merida pointed behind her. "Look out!" Merida shouted. Astrid rolled her eyes and then turned around smashing the shield against the side of the Gronkle's head. It screeched and then flew over towards Fishlegs and Snotlout.

"Maybe you should head back to the castle and bake some scones or something." Astrid said slinging the axe over her shoulder and then turned to watch the other take on the dragon.

Merida frowned at her. Who did this girl think she was? "The Gronkle, one of the more durable dragons. It's thick rough skin makes it hard to bring down, and it's one of the most powerful. But it's also the slowest of the bunch." Gobber explained.

Fishlegs swung his hammer knocking the Gronkle towards Bart and Boyd. The two blonds lifted their weapons and prepared to swing, but then stopped when they saw it preparing a ball of fire. They quickly jumped out of the way managing to avoid the blast. "Each dragon has a certain number of shots. How many does a Gronkle have?"

"Two?" Merida guessed. That's how many she'd seen him shoot so far.

"Not even close." Gobber said.

"Five!" Snotlout said smiling.

"Wrong... again." Gobber said shaking his head.

"Six!" Fishlegs shouted.

"Correct."

The Gronkle lunged at Boyd with its teeth bared. It easily knocked the boy to the ground and then stepped over him ready to deliver a finishing blow. Suddenly an arrow bounced off the side of its head. It turned and saw Merida notching another arrow. "Over here yoo ugly thing yoo." She said firing another arrow. It was just as ineffective as the first.

The Gronkle roared and then charged at her. Merida stood her ground and fired arrow after arrow, but it didn't even slow him down. The dragon was now in front of her and opened its mouth ready to take a bite out of the princess. Just as it was about to chomp down, it was stopped. The red headed princess watched as Fishlegs yanked the Gronkle back by its tail.

He pulled it back further and then spun it around a few times before throwing it. It hit the ground with a yelp before flying back towards

the stable. "Are you okay?" Fishlegs asked looking towards her.

She looked at him for a few moments. She knew judging by his size that he was strong, but she never thought he was that strong. He had tugged that dragon back like he was nothing. She had only ever seen Bart display that type of strength before. "Um... aye, I'm fine."

Fishlegs nodded and then walked back over towards Gobber. "Alright, tha actually went better than ah hoped." He said happily. "Take a quick break and we'll get back ta work. Next up on the list is the deadly Nadder, and then some basic hand to hand combat. Dragons are nae the only thing you have to worry aboot on the battle field ye know."

The group began heading towards the mess hall. Ian picked up his sword when he heard the twins laughing. "Try to hang on to your sword next time butterfingers." Ruff said.

Ian glared at them. No one mocked of swordsmanship, least of all some Viking girl. "He can't, he's too busy brushing his hair." Tuff added.

"Why you!" Ian looked like he was going to charge but he felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked back and saw it was Bart. The larger boy shook his head. "Bah!"

"He's right. It is nae worth at." Merida said. Right now, they were clearly out of their comfort zone. They had no idea about dragons. But when it came to hand to hand combat, swordplay and archey, they would surely have the advantage.

Boyd pointed over towards the gates. "Hey, look."

They all looked over and saw a group of men hauling something behind them. Looking closer, Merida could see that they were dragging the dragon from last night behind them. "I still cannae believe that toothpick is the dragon conquerer." Ian said.

"Me either." Merida agreed. Suddenly an idea popped into her head, and a smile crept across her face. She didn't know anything about dragons, but she knew where she could find out.

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat at the top of the castle working on his sketch of the Skrill. It had woken up before they got to it last night, and they ended up having to chase it down. "So, you chased down that nasty beastie did ye?" He looked up and saw a mess of red hair before him. It was the princess.</p>

He quickly rose to his feet. "Oh, Princess, I didn't see you there! I-"

She held her hand up. "Please stop talkin'. Ah did nae find ye so ye could start ramblin' again like ye did last night." She said cutting him off. He stopped and looked confused. Find him? That implied that she was looking for him. But why would the princess by searching him out?

"Is... there something I can do for you princess?" He asked.

She looked him over for a few moments. "Ah heard a very questionable rumor aboot ye. The word around the castle yer the supposed Dragon Conquerer." She said crossing her arms.

He rubbed the back of his neck. "Well, Conquerer isn't really the word I would use."

"Are yoo the one who tamed the dragon or not?" She asked bluntly.

"Yes."

"Ah have tae say, ah did nae picture the Dragon Conquerer as someone... like yoo." She said looking over him. "Little scrawny fer a Viking ain't ye?" She asked.

A million come backs came into his head, but he was pretty sure she had the authority to have him executed, so he decided to keep his mouth shut. "I get that a lot."

"Ah'm sure. But still, ye do seem like ye have some way with tha beast. Since yer such an expert on them, ah assume ye wood know all about how ta fight em."

"Well, I do know a fair share about them-"

"Good, start talkin'."

Hiccup shook his head and looked at her like she was crazy. "Well, that's a little vague. Where in Thor's name am I supposed to start?"

Merida sighed. "Jist somethin' about dragons! Somethin' I can use to fight em!"

Hiccup rubbed his temples. "Look, princess, there's all types of information on dragons. There is no ONE way to fight or tame a dragon. You have to take all type of things into account. What species is the dragon, what class is it, what are it's stats?"

"Stats?" Merida said confused. "A-ah donnae know what any of tha means! Ah jist want ta know where to shoot a blasted dragon with an arrow!"

"What type of dragon?" Hiccup asked.

She scratched her head. "Ah do nae know. Ah think ah heard the one armed man talkin' about... a Deadly Natter or somethin'." She said unsure herself.

He rubbed his chin. "Deadly Natter huh? Their very quick and light on their feet, a hard target to hit from a distance. A well placed arrow in the leg should bring it down, or at the very least slow it down significantly." He explained.

"Where exactly in the leg?" She asked.

"The thigh. But it's an extremely hard shot to make. I mean we're talking about a moving target here, and with a projectile as small as an arrow no less. It's pretty much an impossible shot."

Merida just smirked and began walking off. "Well, we'll jist have tae see aboot tha. Thanks fer the advice Dragon Conquerer."

"Um, actually my name is... and, she's gone." Hiccup said. He shrugged and then went back to his sketch. He was sure everything would work out on its own. When he first heard the training had been approved, he was ecstatic. That quickly changed to worry when he heard they'd been learning how to combat dragon as well.

The real reason behind the training was to help the Scots grow more familiar with them.

But, he realized that it was necessary. They needed to learn how to defend themselves from dragons. They were going to war, and the enemy would be bringing dragon of their own. To send the the Scots into battle without preparing them would be disastrous. And though most dragons were tamed, the fact remained that they were still wild animals, and every so often snapped.

Still, the main reason behind the training was to help the Scots grow more familiar with them. By learning to care and ride for them would ease up the tension in the alliance. It would give them common ground. At least that's what he told his father. He hoped to Odin he was right.

* * *

><p>Gobber stood in front of the door of the stable with a sly smile. "Okay kiddies, now its time ta introduce yoo to the Deadly Nadder." He said. "Nadders are one of tha fastest and deadliest dragons out there. Nae only do they have the hottest fire blast of any dragon, but they also have spines that can turn ye into a pin cushion." He said.<p>

He opened the door and the dragon bursted down and glared at all the teens, who were now on their guard. It looked over them curiously for a few moments. "What's it doing?" Ian asked in a hushed voice.

"Nadders will usually find and pick off the slowest ones first. It's trying to decide who that person is." Astrid explained.

The Nadder turned it's head and it's eyes locked onto Bart, who cringed under it's gaze. It roared and then ran towards the young MacGuffin. He quickly lifted his shield as the others scattered away. The Nadder began circling around Bart who held his sword up ready to fend it off.

Merida once again went straight for her bow and arrow. She notched her arrow, took aim at its thigh, and then let go. The arrow glided through the air heading straight for it's target, but with one swipe of the Nadder's tail, the arrow was snapped in two. "Damn!" Merida cursed.

The Nadder turned towards the princess and roared before flicking it's tail and sending a half dozen spines in her direction. "Look

out!" Ian tackled the red head to the ground just before the spines made contact. "Ah..." Ian groaned in pain and grabbed the cut on his arm.

"Are yoo alright?!" Merida asked worriedly.

"Ah'm fine, it's jist a scratch." He said.

The Nadder looked like it was going to fire again, but Bart stepped forward and deliver a punch to the side of it's head. It stepped back shaking it's head before turning back towards its attacker. It opened it's mouth and fired, but Bart hit the ground. He could feel the intense heat as the blast of fire passed over his body.

Merida notched another arrow and took aim. "No offense princess, but ah think ye shood give up with tha arrows. It donnae really seem like its workin'." Ian said.

"If ah can jist shoot it in the thigh ah can take it doon." She said.

"How do ye even know tha?!" Ian asked.

"Ah jist do!" She shouted back.

He sighed. "Fine! Ah'll slow it down! Do nae miss next time!" He rushed towards the Nadder.

Bart got back up and began swinging at the Nadder, but it easily avoided his blows. Ian joined in, but it still avoided them with relative ease. It wasn't long before Boyd yelled out and then rushed in to join the other young lords.

Snoutlout watched as the three feebly tried to take down the Nadder. He looked towards Astrid. "Should we do something?" He asked.

The blonde shook her head. "Let em struggle for a bit."

Bart lifted his sword up and tried bring it down on the dragon's head, but it shot a blast of fire melting the blade of the sword. Ian twirled his sword in his hand hoping to blind side it, but it flicked its tail knocking his sword from his hand. Boyd jumped on the neck of the beast and bit down onto it's head, but didn't even seem to notice.

It shook it's head flicking Boyd off and then turned towards the three boys. Merida smirked. She had a clear shot now. He released the arrow and sent it sailing through the air. Just as the Nadder was about to strike, the arrow sunk into its leg. The Nadder screeched loudly and then turned towards her. It headed towards her, but it was walking with a limp now.

"Hah! It worked!" Merida said excitedly.

The young lords cheered and the Viking teens all looked surprised. "Well, I'll be damned." Astrid muttered to herself. She had actually managed to hit it's thigh, with an arrow. Hitting a dragons weak spot was hard. Even when you were using an axe or sword from close range, there was no guarantee you would hit it. Was it just a fluke?

"Take that ya scale covered kelpie!" Merida yelled haughtily.

"Well done princess, ye crippled a Nadder. Too bad ye forgot about the wings."

"Whot?"

The Nadder suddenly flew into the air and then sped towards Merida. It swooped down and then used it's hind legs to pin her down to the ground. It roared and opened it's mouth giving Merida a close up view of it's razor sharp teeth. "Merida!" Ian yelled. The young lords all began rushing over to help.

Just as the dragon looked like it was about to behead the Scottish princess, Gobber whistled. The Nadder stopped and then looked up towards the man. "Alright Bessie, ye did a good job today. Noo come on inside so we can fix up tha leg of yours." Gobber said.

The Scottish teens watched in amazement as the dragon began making it's way back towards the stable. Gobber turned towards them. "Well, ye all did a decent job, and I think we can call it a day. Go get a good nights sleep, cause tomorrow will be even better. We'll start with some close combat and then pick up where we let off with the dragons."

With that he closed the door and left the teens standing there. "Whot was that?!" Ian asked.

"It was Bessie, duh." Tuff said as if it were obvious.

"She seemed pretty chilled today though. She didn't even bite anybody today." Ruff said.

"It's probably because she'd been cooped up in the stable for so long. Usually she has time to stretch her wings a little." Fishlegs said.

The princess and the lords watched as the teens headed back towards their campsite, chatting casually with one another. Merida glanced over and saw Astrid staring at her. "Whot?"

Astrid just shook her head and chuckled before following after the others. "Vikings, are so weird." Ian said. Bart nodded in agreement. "Ah mean, they make Boyd look normal."

"Yeah... hey!" Boyd said frowning.

* * *

><p>AN: Sorry for the long update, had few other stories to work on, busy schedule, and an upcoming semester to deal with. I hope you guys enjoyed the chapter. Remember to Read and Review! **

4. Helping Hand

Merida made her way down the stairs and towards the smithy. She opened the door and saw the 'Dragon Conqueror' hammering away. She walked up towards him. "Hey!" She shouted. He didn't answer her. He didn't even seem like he noticed her. "Hey! Ah'm talkin' to ye!" She

shouted louder. He still hammered away at the scrap of metal, oblivious to her presence.

She reached forward and turned grabbed his shoulder before turning him around. He dropped his hammer and looked surprised. "Hey, what in the-?!" He stopped when he saw the red head standing before him. "Oh, Princess! I didn't know you were here!" He said quickly.

"Why did ye nae tell me aboot the wings?!" She snapped.

He raised his eyebrow at her. "Umâ€| excuse me?"

"Ah'm askin' why you did nae warn me aboot the wings! As soon as ah shot the dragon in the leg the blasted thing took te the air!" She said.

He looked nervous. "Well, I thought you knew. I mean taking the wings out is dragon fighting basics. Didn't Gobber teach you that?" He asked.

"No!" She said irritated. "Ah'm not a blasted Viking! Ah do nae know what any of the beasties can do! Why do ye think ah came to ye in the first place?!"

"Desperation?"

She grabbed the front of his shirt and yanked him forward. "Do ye think this is funny?! Me and mah friends getting tossed around by those things?! Huh?!" She said angrily.

He quickly shook his head. "No! Of course not milady! I was honestly only trying to help you out." He said holding his hands up.

She sighed. "Why do ye keep calling me that?" She asked annoyed.

"What?"

"Milady. Ah'm not yer lady, so why do you keep calling me that?"

"Umâ€| I just thought that's how you were supposed to refer to royal women."

"Well ye don't." She said sternly.

"Soâ€| should I call you princess or your heinous-"

"Merida! Just call me Merida!" She snapped. She shook her head and rubbed her temples. How was anybody supposed to believe that this bumbling nervous wreck was the hero of his tribe?

He reached up and rubbed the back of his neck.

"Hiccup."

"Whot?"

"That's my name. Hiccup."

She looked at him for a few moments. That's right, his father had

introduced him during their first meeting. She still couldn't believe anyone, even a Viking, could have such a ridiculous name.

"Right."

"Yeah, ridiculous name, I know. But it's mine." He said shrugging.

"Anyway, I'm sorry about what happened. Just tell me the next dragon and I'll make sure to tell you everything I know about it, and I mean everything."

She looked at him for a few moments. "Nae, tha will nae doo."

"What?"

"Tomorrow yoo are comin ta trainin', and yoo can show me jist what ah'm supposed to do against these things." She said

"What?! Wait a second, I can't! I've got a lot of work to do here! And besides, I've already been through dragon training before!" He said hoping to discourage her.

"So have yer friends, but they're still training. Besides, we're nae jist preparing against the dragons, we're going to hand to hand combat as well. And honestly ye don't really look like yer the close combat type."

"Well, can't really argue with you there." He shook his head realizing that he was only making her point more valid. "I meanâ€œ I don'tâ€œ is this a royal order?" He asked.

Merida frowned. "It is now."

"Aw c'mon! I don't want to go to training!"

"To bad!" Merida said. "Ah want ye ta come ta training tomorrow. If ah don't see ye, ah'll come and find ye. And yoo will nae like it when ah do."

Hiccup sighed. "Alright, alright. I'll be there."

"Good." She said nodding. She turned and then began walking off. Honestly she wasn't sure if he would be any help, but at this point she'd try just about anything.

After she left Hiccup sighed. Taming dragons was an easy task for him. But fighting them, one on oneâ€œ not so much. "What have I gotten myself in to?"

* * *

><p>"Today we'll be dealing with one of tha nastier dragons, The Hideous Zippleback. This dragon it is one of the trickier ones, one head spits the gas, the other lights it. Twice the heads, twice the danger. Which is why today's keyword is teamwork." Gobber said looking around at all of them. "I'm going to team each of you up with someone else. One of you will have a bucket, the other a shield. Work together to try and bring down the Zippleback."<p>

Merida looked around annoyed. Where in the world was Hiccup? Was he trying to ditch dragon training? He did seem a bit into his work in

the smithy, it wouldn't be a surprise if he ended up losing time down there. Well she would go down there and drag him out of that place if she had to. "Wait, sorry! Sorry I'm late!" They turned and saw Hiccup approaching.

"Well, look who's decided to grace us with their presence today." Gobber said sarcastically.

"Well I couldn't miss one of your Thor like lessons a second day Gobber." He said smiling at his mentor. He jumped over the gate of the den and walked in line with the others. He glanced over at Merida who was giving him a look. "What?" He asked.

"Nothin'. Ah jist was nae sure ye were comin'."

He rubbed the back of his neck. "Yeah well, I had to finish up a little project of mine."

Gobber looked over at the two. "Hiccup, since ye know the most experienced we'll put ye wit the princess." Zippleback's were much trickier than a Nadder, and more lethal than a Gronkle. The last thing he wanted was for the princess to end up maimed under his watch.

Hiccup nodded in understanding. Merida knew what was going on, and while she didn't like the idea of having someone babysitting her, least of all a string bean like Hiccup, it did give her a chance to learn more about these things.

"Alright Snotlout, you team up withâ€| Ian."

Snotlout turned towards the Macintosh. "Don't slow me down Scott."

Ian glared right back at him. "Jist try an keep up, Viking."

Gobber looked over towards Astrid. "How about you team up with Bart." Astrid looked over to the large young lord who simple offered a small wave. She shrugged. It could have been worst. "Tuffnut, you're with Boyd. Fishlegs, you're with Ruff." Everyone got with them partners, and Gobber passed each group one shield and on bucket of water. "One of you will hold them off with the shield, the other will hit it with water. Who's who is up to yoo."

Hiccup turned towards Merida holding both items towards her. She looked back and force between them. She doubted he had the strength to even toss a bucket of water that high, but she didn't like the idea of her safety riding on him either. "Look, the Zippleback's are all fully trained for this. They're not gonna hurt anyoneâ€| much."

"Well, in tha case ah suppose ah'll take the water." She said grabbing the bucket.

After everyone sorted out who was doing what, Gobber opened the door and a cloud of green gas seeped out. Everyone took a few steps back, but soon they were all surrounded by the green gas. "Don't breathe too much gas in, makes you dizzy." Hiccup warned.

"Tis nae the gas ah'm worried aboot."

They heard a hissing noise and Merida quickly turned around ready to splash the dragon. She frowned and sighed upon realizing it was just Ian. "Watch where yer flinging tha water princess." He said frowning back.

Snotlout walked up behind him. "Hey pretty boy, stop chatting it up with curls over there and focus, you're the one with the water."

"Hey! Ye do nae have te worry aboot me Viking! Jist be ready with that shield!"

The two began yelling at one another and Merida sighed. It wasn't like she was too thrilled to be working with Vikings either, but they were training for a war. She glanced down and then saw something wrapping around Ian's leg. "Ian! Yer leg!"

The young lord turned around to ask her what she was talking about, but was pulled off into the gas. Merida looked shocked as the bucket of water splash against the ground. Snotlout just laughed. "Ha! I knew that guy couldn't—" Merida saw one of the heads come out and grab him by the back of his shirt. It pulled him off into the gas as well.

She heard both Ian and Snotlout grunting, and yelling. She turned to Hiccup who just smirked. "Their not hurt, Barf and Belch just threw them outside the fence."

"Blasted two headed devil!" She heard Ian yell.

"Tuff! Your dragon's head bit me!" Snout shouted.

Merida looked around carefully trying to spot the dragon, but even with her sharp eyesight she could hardly tell what was what in this cloud of gas. She saw a figure move by and prepared and throw water, but Hiccup stopped her. "Hold on minute, we only have one bucket, make it count." He said eyeing the figure carefully.

As the figures got closer they could see it was only Astrid and Bart. "I forgot how sneaky and clever Barf and Belch used to be before the twins got a hold of them." Astrid said holding her shield. Bart was walking behind her, carrying the bucket. It made sense seeing as he was much taller than her and would have a better chance as dousing the dragon.

Merida noticed that Bart looked a bit fidgety. "Ye can calm down Bart, we'll be fine."

They then hurt Boyd yelping, followed by Tuffnut's laugh. "Ha! He's not gonna touch me, I'm his rider!" They heard a snapping sound. "OW! Hurt! I am very much hurt!"

Bart turned back towards Merida, a fearful look on his face. "Well, they will nae kill ye." She said smiling nervously. She heard a hissing sound next to her ear and then jumped away when she saw one of the heads from the corner of her eye.

The dragon towered over the group, and then swept its tail forward. Hiccup, Merida, and Astrid all jumped up managing to avoid it, but

Bart had his legs knocked right from under him. He dropped the bucket and Astrid looked annoyed. The blonde tossed her shield at the dragon and it landed right in its mouth. "That's the gas head! Princess, hit the other with the water!"

Merida nodded and then tossed the bucket of water at the spark head. It shook its head and glared down at her angrily, but then turned away and headed back towards the stable. They heard a whistle, and suddenly the gas was blown away by the wings of a Nadder. It landed down next to Gobber who nodded.

"Good job lads and lasses, teamwork at its finest." The blacksmith said before turning towards Snotlout and Ian. "Most of ye anyway." He turned back towards Hiccup and the others. "You can all take a lil break. When we get back, we'll take a break from dragon fightin' and get to some combat lessons."

Ian got up and smiled. "Finally! Somethin' I can sink me teeth into!"

"You mean another thing you can screw up." Snotlout said rolling his eyes.

The two turned towards on another, looking ready to get into another argument. "Snotlout, just cool it for a minute would you?" Hiccup said trying to calm his cousin.

Snotlout turned towards him and then snorted. He walked off looking back at Ian over his shoulder. "I'm watching you!" He said glaring at him.

"Come anytime ye savage." Ian said glaring back.

"Ian." Merida said giving him a harsh stare.

"He started it." Ian said annoyed.

"Well ah'm ended it!" She snapped. He mumbled under his breath and began heading towards the mess hall. Merida was about to follow him, but noticed Astrid staring at her. "Whot?"

Astrid snorted and then began walking off. "You're weren't useless."

Merida looked a bit surprised. Was that a compliment? She looked over at Hiccup for conformation. He simply shrugged, and then began following after the blond. Merida felt a hand on his shoulder. She looked up to see Gobber. "The lass is nae tryin' ye, so that's a great start." He said flashing her a smile.

She knew very little about this man. Only that he was Stoick's right hand man. She also figured that his mother must have been a slave, given his accent. "Gobber, may ah ask ye somethin'?"

"Of course princess."

"When ye first saw me, did ye think ah was ah spoiled lil royal?" She asked.

"No." He answered honestly. "Ah could tell wit one look at ye yer

were no spoiled stuck up royal. If ah hadn't have been told by the king himself ah would nae have even believed you were the princess." He said locking up the stable.

Merida looked a bit surprised by that. "Really?"

"Aye. Suppose ah'm just good a readin' people." He said cracking his neck. "Same with Hiccup. From tha day he was born ah knew he was nae goin' to be a normal Viking." He took a seat and then grabbed a barrel of water. He lifted it up easily and took a few mouthful before dropping it on the ground.

She amazed by the casual show of strength, but then shook her head. "Ta be fair, sayin' Hiccup is nae a normal Viking does nae really take ah sixth sense."

"Nae if yer judging him by appearance. Ah find that does nae really work out so well most of the time. Hiccup was much weaker than the other Viking. Could nae lift a hammer, a sword, or even a shield. But he was smart. Much smarter than any Viking on Berk. Always making these crazy contraptions in the smithy."

She looked curious. "Really now?"

Gobber nodded. "Aye. He always wanted ta kill dragons, impress his da. I told him it was a waste ah time. See, ah always thought he'd be a weapon smith. He'd make weapons that could bring down dragons before they could even reach the island. But, ah was definitely wrong on that one, cause next thing ah know he comes flying in on a Nightfury."

Merida looked confused. "Nightfury? Is tha the black one he always rudin' around wit?" She asked. She didn't really know why she'd even bothered asking. Of course it was his dragon.

Gobber nodded in answer. "Hiccup downed him wit some contraption one night. Wanted te bring his hide back, impress his father an' all that. But when it came time te doo it, he could nae. Everyone, even his own father thought he was crazy. But in the end the two of em saved the entire village. At the cost of his leg too."

She glanced over at Hiccup and saw his metal leg. "He had the dragon with em' and he still managed to lose ah leg?" She said snorting. She supposed she was being a little unfair. Her dad lost a leg against a bear. Sure it was an immortal demon bear, but still.

"This was no normal dragon they were fightin! It was huge, bigger tha any dragon we hae ever seen before! It scorched every last one of our ship with one shot! It could crushed this whole castle!" He said moving his arms for emphasis. "Oh, but Hiccup and Toothless were going toe to toe with it! We were lucky he came back jist missing a leg."

Merida looked amazed. "He really took down a dragon tha size?"

"Aye, and became the village hero! There's not a name in the history books that can say they've done what he did! First to ride a dragon, and first to slay one that size!" He said patting his knee. "And tha is jist one of many times he saved the village."

She took a seat on the barrel across from him and began listening to Gobber as he started telling stories about Hiccup and the others.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and the others sat at their usual table talking about the next part of their training. It had been a while since they'd gone over hand to hand combat. "I don't know what you're all surprised about. You should have been practicing earlier. This is war, like full scale war. We won't always have our dragons to back us up." Astrid said.</p>

Snotlout chuckled. "Ha, the last thing I need practice in is hand to hand combat. I'm pretty much unstoppable." He said flexing her arm.

Hiccup chuckled while Astrid rolled her eyes. As much as they hated to admit it, Snotlout was the best fighter in the group. "I don't know Astrid. You gave the princess a little credit earlier. I say that counts for something." Hiccup said smirking.

She shrugged. "I just said she wasn't useless. She's definitely got more guts than the rest of the scots." She said stabbing down on her haggis. She sniffed at it and then held her nose. "I'm never going to get used to this stuff." She said before tossing it to the twins.

Tuff reached up for it, but Ruff kicked him in his side knocking him over. She stabbed up and caught it on her fork. "Don't know what you're talking about. This stuff taste great." She said taking a bite. Tuff got up and then tackled his sister to the ground.

As the twins fought the others continued with their conversation. "Well, she had been coming to me a lot and asking about dragons. I think she's eager to ride one."

"Man, we've been here less than a month and Hiccup is already getting it on with the princess." Snotlout said chuckling.

Hiccup nearly choked on his food. He hit his chest a few times took a deep breath. "It's not like that, it is not like that at all. I was only giving her some advice." He assured.

"You know, we'd probably be more inclined to believe you if you didn't choke on your food and go into a panic attack." Astrid said smirking.

He sighed and ran his hand over his face. Fishlegs patted him on the shoulder. "Hey look, we're only teasing you a bit. You've been really on edge since we got here. You should relax some."

"Yeah, I know. It's just that between the shaky alliance, dealing with the cranky dragons, and the princess hounding me over training, I'm kind of stressed out." As if on cue, he heard a plate land down beside him and then turned around to see Merida looking down at him. "Oh no."

"Oh yeah." She said sitting down next to him. "Ah have a few questions ah wanted te ask ye before we git back ye trainin'." She said as she began eating.

Hiccup could have cut through the tension with a knife. The room had gone completely silent, and all eyes were on them. The princess of scots sitting at a table of Vikings. It was justâ€œ weird. "Uhâ€œ like what?" Hiccup asked nervously.

"Gobber said the net dragon we're gonna be fightin' is the Monstrous Nightmare. Ah want te know everything there is about this thing."

"Armed with scary fangs, extra extendable claws. Defenses 2. Radar 0. Poison 3. Hunting Ability 10. Speed 16. Fear and Fight Factor 10. Violent, stubborn, and tenacious. Its attack strategy is to coat itself in fire, and attack you as it's flaming from nose to tail." Fishlegs informed.

Everyone looked at him, eyebrows raised. "Soâ€œ ah'm assuming this is Fishlegs."

Fishlegs looked nervous. "Um, yes. Fishlegs Ingeman your majesty! It's an honor to be able to speak to you and-"

Merida held her hand up to stop him. "First, thank ye for all the information. Two, please jist call me Merida." He nodded nervously. She looked around the table. "So, tha' would make yoo two Ruffnut an' Tuffnut, and yoo Astrid, and yooâ€œ!" She glanced over towards Snotlout who was wiggling his eyebrows at her. "â€œSnotlout."

"The one and only."

She ignored him and then turned back to Hiccup. "Anyway, ah have another thing ah want to ask ye about. Ah want te train a dragon. And ah don't mean when Gobber gets around to it, ah mean as soon as possible."

Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck. "Princessâ€œ!" She glared at him. "Merida, there are a lot of things you need to learn about dragons before you start training."

She snorted. "Yer the dragon conqueror, if anyone can teach me, it's yoo."

He still looked hesitant. Teaching the princess to ride dragons might help ease the tension between the scots and Vikings. But if something went wrong, then it was a one way ticket to war. "If I teach you, you have to trust me, and listen to everything I say."

She smiled. "Alright then! If everything works out, then ah'll convince me da to let tha dragons out of tha stable." She said holding her hands out.

He smiled. Toothless and the others were getting incredibly tired of that stable. If this could get them out, then he was totally on board. "You got a deal."

* * *

><p>AN: Sup! Been a while since I updated this story, but I was lacking inspiration. I've been thinking about a few ways to take this story. I'm definitely going to have the first half focus on

younger Hiccup and Merida, but I thought maybe the second half would be years later, and have an older Hiccup and co. **

**I was also thinking of adding other movies into the crossover. (Maybe having them go to Corona or Arendelle for help.) Keep in mind, this would be in the second half of the story. Still, I want to see what you guys think of it first. Should I think about taking it in a different direction, or just keep the whole story focused on HTTYD and Brave? **

Anyway, hope you like the chapter. Read and Review!

5. Take Your Pick

"Okay lads an lasses, ah'll be teachin' ye all hand te hand combat." Lord Macintosh said spinning a sword in his hand. He looked around at the group of teens. There was a small crowd of Scottish and Viking warriors around them. Each eager to see what their young warriors had to offer.

"First things first, everyone grab a weapon." He instructed. Everyone began making their way to the rack of weapons nearby.

Merida of course went for a short sword, both Astrid and Snotlout grabbed their axes, Fishlegs grabbed a metal hammer, and the twins went for two double headed spears. Ian went for his sword of course, Boyd grabbed mace, and Bart grabbed a huge broadsword. Hiccup looked over the choice of weapons, and then reached for a sword. He lifted it, but quickly lost his balance and started tumbling towards the left.

He somehow managed to steady himself again, and then looked back towards Macintosh. "The weapon tha ye choose are nae to be taken lightly. What weapon ye use, an how skilled ye are wit it, decides whether ye live or die on the battle field." He said spinning his own sword in his hand. "So, let's see what ye got. We're gonna spar, one on one. Who wants te go first?"

Ian quickly and eagerly stepped forward. "Ah will." He said turning towards the other. He pointed his sword at Hiccup. "How aboot it 'Dragon Conqueror'? Up fer a little spar?"

Hiccup looked surprised. Him? Why him? Snotlout stepped forward and pushed Hiccup back. "You ain't getting off that easy pretty boy." He said cracking his neck.

Ian looked at him and smirked. "Oh so ye wanna go first then?"

Lord Macintosh looked back and forth at both boys. "Arigh then. Ah assume ye both know tha' this is jist a spar, so no killin' each other."

"Got it." Both boys said holding up their weapons. They charged at each other, and everyone else took a step back. Metal clashed against metal, and the two were swinging at each other as if it were an actual battle. The crowd cheered at the display. The scots were all cheering for Ian, while the Vikings cried out for Snotlout.

"Take em down Ian!" Hubert cheered.

Gustav raised his hands into the air. "Snotlout! Snotlout! Oy! Oy! Oy!"

Ian's moves were much more precise and clean, whereas Snotlout was much wilder and vicious. Ian jabbed his sword forward and Snotlout moved his head to the side. The sword just barely touched his skin, and left a small scratch. Snotlout merely smiled.

"That all you got Scott!" He shouted swing his axe. Ian blocked with his sword, but it was nearly knocked out of his hands. Snotlout clearly had the advantage when it came to muscle.

Snotlout swung again, but this time Ian ducked. He barely avoided the hit. A few strands of hair went falling to the ground. Ian looked furious. "Ye bastard!" He swung at him with his sword, but Snotlout blocked it with the handle of his axe.

He pushed Ian back and then charged at him. Ian jabbed at him again, but this time Snotlout did something crazy. He lowered his head and charged at him. The sword bounced off his helmet and Ian was thrown off balance. Snotlout rushed him.

Ian quickly regained balance however, and then used the sword handle to strike Snotlout in the back of the neck. Snotlout fell to the ground face first. "Ha! Nice try Viking sc-!" Before he could finish, Snotlout reached out and swung his arm at Ian's ankle. He knocked the Scots feet from under him causing him to fall to the ground.

Before Ian could even think about getting up, Snotlout had his axe to his throat. "Look like I win, scot." He said wearing a smirk on his face. The Vikings all cheered, and Scots looked irritated. How could Ian, one of their best swordsman, let himself lose to a Viking?

Gustav raised his hands up. "Alright Snotlout! Oy! Oy! Oy!" Hubert, Hamish, and Harris all gave thumbs down.

Ian looked shocked, and then furious. "Ye cheated!"

Snotlout laughed. "I cheated? Ha! You're just lucky this is practice!"

Lord Macintosh stepped forward. "Aye, he's right son." Everyone looked towards him a little surprised. They hadn't expected him to agree with a Viking, much less one who had just defeated his son. "In a real war there is nae such thing as cheatin'. Ye win by anythin' necessary. Tha winner lives, an tha loser dies. It's simple as tha."

Ian looked at his father surprised, and then cursed under his breath. Snotlout lowers his weapon allowing the scot to get up. "Next time Viking." Ian warned.

"Any time pretty boy."

"Next up is yoo two big oafs. Step on up here an show us what ye got." Lord Macintosh said looking towards Fishlegs and Bart. They both walked up nervously as the crowd around them cheered. Neither of the two boys liked to be in the spotlight, or to fight. To be doing

both at the same time was a little nerve wrecking. "Go."

Bart swung his broadsword, and Fishlegs just barely parried it with the hammer. He brought the sword back and swung, this time more forcefully. Fishlegs lifted the hammer again, but this time the sword cut straight through it. "Ah!" Fishlegs dropped what was left of the hammer and ran back towards the others.

This time it was the Scots turn to cheer. "Embarrassing!" Snotlout said shaking his head.

Bart put his sword in the ground and walked over towards Fishlegs. He began speaking, losing just about everyone except the MaGuffin clansmen. "Yeah, I'm fine." Fishlegs said.

Everyone looked shocked. "Yoo understand him?!" Ian asked amazed.

"Oh course I do. Don't you?" Fishlegs said confused.

"Uh-huh well, tha's a thing. Who's next?" Lord Macintosh said.

Merida raised her hand. "Ah want a turn."

He looked at her surprised. "Oh princess. Ah don't think ye need any hand to hand combat. Ah mean yer already so skilled with a bow tha-"

"Ye do nae me to fight do ye?" She asked crossing her arms.

"Nae, it's just that-"

She glared at him. "Ah want te fight!"

He raised his hands in defeat. "Alright, alright." He said looking around. He couldn't afford to have the princes injured on his watch, but he'd seen what she'd done to Ian when the two disagreed, so he wasn't going to deny her. He would just put her up against someone weak.

He glanced at the twins. No, those two fought one another all the time, and they were like animal. The blonde Vikings girlâ€| no, much to skilled. Boyd wasn't an option either. Knowing that wild little maniac he'd end up dropping his sword and biting her. He looked at Hiccup who was struggled to hold his sword. "How about him?"

"Me?" Hiccup said surprised.

"Him?" Merida said in disbelief.

Everyone looked anxious. The princess of Scotland going up against the heir of the Hairy Hooligans. This would be fun to watch. "This'll be interesting." Ruffnut said as she and Tuff leaned back against the fence.

Merida sighed. "Tha's nae fair and yoo know it! He's a toothpick! Yer only putting him against me so ah will nae get hurt! Can't ah fight one of tha others instead?"

They heard a few chuckles from the crowd and Hiccup cringed. "Ouch!" He said placing his hand over his heart.

"Oh c'mon now princess, ah'm sure he's a fine opponent. Now, both of you step on up here."

Merida rolled her eyes and then walked forward. Hiccup dragged his sword behind him and stood in front of her. He struggled to raise his sword in front of him, nearly falling over onto his side. There were chuckles running through the crowd, mostly from the scots. "Ye have ta be kiddin' me." Merida muttered.

He managed to steady himself, and Lord Macintosh signaled for them to go. They circled around one another. Hiccup knew he was in a bind. He knew that this girl was not your average princess. Chances were she knew how to use a sword. And even if she didn't, he couldn't fight her. If he ended up hurting her, unlikely as that was, the king would have his head.

Merida stepped forward lunging at him with her sword. He somehow managed to block it with his own. He was easily pushed back however. The Scots all cheered out as Hiccup was pressed against the fence. "Take it seriously." Merida said.

"What?" Hiccup asked.

"Ah'm nae tha princess rite now, ah'm yer enemy. So fight me seriously." She muttered. He tried to push her back, only managing to push her a few feet. At least he had some breathing space now. That didn't last long however, as Merida was back on him almost instantly.

"C'mon sis!" Hamish yelled.

"Cut him down!" Hubert shouted.

He jumped to the side and Merida missed. Hiccup stumbled and used his sword to keep himself from falling. He saw the red head coming at him again, and tried to pull his sword out of the ground. "C'mon! C'mon!" He said struggling.

Both Gobber and Lord Macintosh looked ready to step in. Princess or not, Gobber wasn't about to let his apprentice be killed. And while Lord Macintosh could care what happened to some Viking, he knew if he let the chief son died, the alliance would be over, and those dragon would be all over the place.

He pulled as hard as he could, and the sword came out of the ground. His whole body swung around, and the sword headed right for Merida's head. She ducked down barely avoiding the blade. The crowd all gasped. He had nearly decapitated her. Hiccup looked shocked. He was about to apologize, but Merida swung her sword at his leg.

Metal clashed against metal, and Hiccup found himself falling to the ground. His metal leg had been knocked away from him. He landed face first in the dirt and groaned. "OW!"

"Hiccup!" Astrid and Snotlout quickly made their way over to help him.

Merida looked worried. She had just meant to knock him off his feet, not knock off his leg. "Oh no! Ah'm so sorry! I did nae mean to!" She said bending down to check on him.

"It's okay, I'm fine." Hiccup assured. The crowd around them began laughing at the scene. He tried to push himself up, but fell. Snotlout grabbed one of his arms, and Merida stepped forwards to get the other. Snotlout glared at her for a moment.

"Ah'm jist tryin' te help." She said honestly. He kept glaring at her until Hiccup nudged him. He nodded towards her, and she reached down grabbing the other. They helped him to his feet, while Astrid picked up his leg.

The crowd was still laughing as Astrid walked over and began reattaching his leg. Merida frowned and then turned towards the crowd. "Shut it!" She shouted angrily.

Everyone then stopped, mostly out of shock. She had just been trying to cut this boy down a minute ago, now she wasâ€¦ defending him? "Merida, it's okay." Hiccup said.

"No, it's nae. Tha next person who laughs better be ready ta step in here an' fight me!" She said pointing her sword around. "Ah dare one more person ta laugh! Go ahead!" There was nothing but silence. She snorted. "Ah thought so."

Astrid got Hiccup's leg back on and he moved it around a bit to make sure it wasn't loose. He looked up at Merida. "Thanks."

"Yer welcome." She said walking back over towards the young lords. Ian opened his mouth to say something, but she shot him a glare. "Nae one word Ian." She said warningly. He shrugged and raised his hands in defeat.

Gobber got up. "Alright, what do ye say we take a little break for now?" He asked looking towards Lord Macintosh.

"Ah think tha's fer the best." He said. "Take aboot an hour or two te rest, an then we'll pick up where we left off." The crowd began to disperse, and the teens headed for the mess hall.

Gobber watched them as they left. "They're a strange bunch."

"Aye." Lord Macintosh said nodding. "Stubborn as mules, every single one of em."

"Let's hope that stubbornness helps them on the battlefield."

* * *

><p>Merida sat at her usual table and ate her lunch, while the others just stared at her. They were all surprised by her outburst earlier. She honestly didn't know why. They acted like she had proposed to him or something. "Stop staring." She said nothing, not even glancing at them.<p>

"Alright, ah'm sorry but ah gotta ask." Ian said. "Why did ye speak up fer him? Ah mean ah'm nae sayin' ye were wrong, but why? A week ago ye couldn't stand them? Now yer sittin' at their table, eattin'

with them, speaking up fer them? Is it ah political thing? Is yer da makin ye?"

Merida sighed. "No, it's nae. Ah jist did nae think him losin' his leg was somethin' to laugh aboot. Imagine if it was my da? Do ye think any of yer fathers would be laughing then?"

"Mine might." Boyd stated.

They all looked at him. "Well, Lord Dingwall might, but tha others would nae." She said picking at her food. "An besides, he's helping me train a dragon." She muttered.

All three young lords looked at her in shock. "He whot?"

"He's teaching me how ta ride a dragon." She repeated. "Ah told him if he taught me how te ride, than ah would talk da into letting the dragons out of the stables."

"An ye think yer dad will agree ta that?" Boyd asked.

She crossed her arms. "Of course he will." She said confidently. "If ah can learn ta tame these beasties, he will nae have any worries aboot letting them out. And besides, it'll put more people at ease if a Scot can learn how to order them around."

They could see what she was saying. If they learned how to control them as well, they wouldn't have to worry about the Vikings turning the beasts on them. "You can't really order them around you know." They all looked up and saw Hiccup standing near the table.

"What do ye want, Viking?" Ian asked glaring at him.

Hiccup looked at him strangely. "Umâ€œ| would you to stop glaring at me be a good start?" He asked. Merida smacked Ian on his arm and he grunted before looking back down at his plate. "I was thinking since we had a few hours, we could get started on dragon training."

Merida smiled brightly. "Really?! Now?!" She asked happily.

"Well, Gobber said it was fine, so I don't see why not." He said before turning towards the others. "You guys can come too, if you want." He began walking off, and Merida quickly went after him. The young lords all looked at each other and then got up and began following them.

He led them all back to the stables. Gobber and Lord Macintosh were nowhere to be seen. They were probably in a meetingâ€œ| or they were drinking. The second one seemed more likely. There were two guards in front of the stables. "Move it." Merida ordered.

They glanced at each other then back to her. "Apologizes princess, but yer father gave us explicit orders nae to let you inside. In fact, he was very specificâ€œ| specific enough to mention you by name." He explained.

Hiccup stepped forward. "It's okay, I'm going to be with them."

"Yeah, because we're going to let the dragon conquering Vikings take

the princess and the young lords inside a stable full of dragons." He said sarcastically.

Hiccup sighed. "Guys, how many times have I saved you from getting eaten?" He asked. They glanced at one another. "If I wanted to pull something, I would have done it by now."

"It's nae like we aren't grateful, but we have orders."

"He ordered you not to let Merida in. But did he tell you not to let the dragons out?" Hiccup asked smirking. They simply stared at him for a few seconds, but then moved aside. Hiccup opened the door. "Be right back." He said before walking inside.

They waited outside for a few moments, and then he came back out. "Okay guys, I'd like to formally introduce you to—" He was cut off when Toothless jumped out and pounced on top of him. He began licking him. "Bud! Buddy calm down! I missed you too! Just—! Ah! Gross!"

Merida couldn't believe what she was seeing. That dragon, the one who had taken down the Skrill with such ferocity and accuracy, was all over this boy like some puppy. Merida stepped forward and held her hand out, about to touch him.

Toothless seemed to sense her coming, and quickly backed up. He glared at Merida and bared his teeth. The guard raised their weapons, and Ian reached for his sword. "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Calm down! You just startled him! Lower your weapons, and I promise everything will be fine."

Everyone simply stood in place for a moment. Ian and the guards still holding onto their weapons, and Toothless still growling at them. Merida looked around. "Do what he says." She ordered. Ian grunted, but sheathed his sword. The guards followed suit.

Toothless demeanor relaxed, and he looked around at the unfamiliar faces curiously. "See, he's fine. Now everyone, this is Toothless, my dragon. Toothless, this is Merida and—!" He looked at the young lords confused. "Sorry, didn't get your names."

"Ian."

"Bart."

"Boyd."

Merida looked at Toothless in awe. She had seen him up close before, but it was at night, and he blended in the background. Now that she could see him clearly, she could see how beautiful he was. Toothless looked at her cautiously. He didn't know much about this girl. Only that she and Hiccup were yelling at each other the other night.

She wasn't fighting with him now though, so he guessed that meant she was okay. He moved forward and began sniffing at Merida. She lifted her hand, and he immediately looked up, causing her to freeze. "What's he doing?" Ian asked.

"He's just curious." Hiccup said. "It's okay Toothless. These people

are friends."

That must have been enough for him, because he opened his mouth and then licked Merida's face. She wiped the dragon drool off her face with her sleeve. "Ugh, nasty." She looked down and saw Toothless smiling at her. "Butâ€| kind of cute." She said before scratching under his chin.

Toothless let loose a low purr and began nuzzling Merida. She scratched his head and smiled. "He's like a big kitten." Ian said looking amazed.

He looked towards Ian and then walked towards him. The Scot looked hesitant, but reached out and patted him on the head. Toothless made his way over to the other young lords who took their turns patting and scratching him. Hiccup chuckled as he watched his friend soak up the attention. "See, he's really nice isn't he."

"As sweet as a wee lamb." Merida said giggling.

"Ah suppose he is prettyâ€| cool." Ian admitted.

"When do we get to ride em?" Boyd asked.

Hiccup raised his hand. "Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Before flying you need to pick out a dragon and make a connection with it." He explained.

"That's the part we're going to work on now." They turned and then saw Astrid coming towards them. She was carrying a bag over her shoulder. "I see Toothless is happy about finally getting to spread his wings. Can't blame him. He's been cooped up in that thing forever."

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah. Hopefully he'll get the chance to get out of here for good. Did you bring everything?" He asked. She placed the bag on the ground and then kicked it over. It was full of fish.
"Great. Now everyone pick up a fish, and we can get started."

Merida and the others were clearly confused, but each picked up fish. Hiccup walked over to the stable and then opened the door. A number of dragons began walking out. "Don't worry, I didn't let any of the aggressive ones out of their pens." He said.

The dragons all began crowding around the teen. They were sniffing at them curiously. "There a number of dragons you can pick from. You already know some of them, but there's plenty of others too. Take your time and decide which one you'd like to try and bond with. When you do, we can move on to phase two."

Ian was clearly nervous about being surrounded by so many dragons. He tried to relax, since he felt like they were picking up on his nervousness. He felt breathing on the back of his neck, and then jumped slightly. There was nothing behind him. "Whot in theâ€|" Suddenly a dragon appeared before him.

He stumbled back clearly startled, but managed to balance himself. He looked over the dragon curiously. It looked right back, returning the curious stare. "That's a Changewing." Hiccup explained. "It can blend in with its surrounding, shoot acid, and even hypnotize."

Ian looked back towards it. "Huh, yer quite an interestin one ain't ye."

Bart looked around nervously. He had no idea which dragon he was going to choose. He felt someone nudging his leg, and looked over to see a Gronkle. He reached down and began rubbing its side. It rolled over and stuck its tongue out panting.

Boyd saw a Zippelback who had simply stretched out its wings, and then laid down against the fence. He slowly inched his way towards it. One of the heads opened an eye and looked up towards him. He froze in place. The dragon rolled its eyes and closed its eyes again. The other head looked up and blew smoke from its nostril.

Merida looked around, but didn't see any dragons she was interested in. "Where's the Skrill?" She asked looking around.

Hiccup looked at her as if she was crazy. "The Skrill? Its inside locked up with all the other incredibly dangerous and aggressive dragons. There's no way I'm going to let you near that thing a second time. It almost killed you, remember?"

She huffed. "Ah'm telling ye, ah almost had it. Can't ah at least see it?" She asked. Hiccup sighed and ran his hand through his hair. This girl was going to be the death of him.

Astrid who was leaning against the fence smirked. "Well princess, you certainly have guts, I'll give you that. But not even Hiccup could train the Skrill. It's just not willing to listen to anybody." She explained.

"It'll listen ta me." Merida said crossing her arms.

Astrid just eyed her for a second and then smiled. "Okay then, show me." She said as she headed inside the stable. Merida smiled and followed her inside.

Hiccup's jaw dropped. "What the-?! Astrid, Merida! What are you two doing! You can't go near that thing!" He shouted heading inside. He turned back towards Toothless. "Make sure the guys don't get eaten by dragon, got it Bud." Toothless nodded.

Astrid led Merida towards the pen where the Skrill was locked up. The dragon saw them and shot them a deadly glare. They could both feel a tingling on their skin. "We've been waiting for its charge to die down, it should have much left." Astrid explained opening the gate.

Merida walked inside and held her hand out. The closer she got, the more tingling she could feel in her fingers. Astrid reached out and grabbed her hand. "That's far enough. If it really is willing to put up with you, than it'll touch you hand with its snout."

The redhead nodded and just waited for the dragon to react. As she did, she glanced over at Astrid. "Hey, nae ta be rude, but why are ye helpin' me?" She asked.

Astrid thought for a second. "Don't know." She said simply. Whether it was the princess' tenacity, or the fact that she had helped

Hiccup, she had felt like she had something in common with her.

Merida turned back to the Skrill and then felt a shock to her hand. "OW!" She glared down at the dragon who wore a smirk on its face. "Ye did tha on purpose!" It grunted and then closed its eyes looking smug. Merida bent down so she was face to face with it. "Hey! Do nae ignore me!"

It took a deep breath, and then blew smoke from its nostrils. Merida's face was now covered in soot. She wiped her face and then reached forward grabbing the sides of the Skrill's face. "You cheeky lil bugger!" She said pulling.

Astrid grew wide eyed and then reached out. Hiccup ran over and saw what was happening, and then gasped. "Wait a second, don't do that!" He shouted.

The Skrill growled and then suddenly a spark of electricity came from it. Merida was tossed across the room. She landed on the other side of the pen. "Merida!" Hiccup and Astrid both jumped over the fence and made their way to her.

Merida got up and groaned. Hiccup and Astrid stopped when they saw her. She looked fine, but her hair was standing straight up, like it was floating. "You okay?" Hiccup asked. Merida nodded. "Goodâ€| are you insane! That thing could have easily killed you!"

"But it didn't." Astrid pointed out. Hiccup turned towards her. "I'm just saying, it could have killed her like it's tried to everyone else, but it didn't. That has to count for something, right?"

Hiccup sighed and then looked at the Skrill. It was laying down calmly. It opened one of its hide and snorted at them before turning away. Hiccup began to approach it, but it shot a streak of lightening at him. He ducked, barely able to avoid the blast.

He got back up and frowned. He didn't understand. Why had it let Merida get close, and not him? "Maybe it does count for something." He muttered. "Anyway, I think we've riled it up enough for today, okay?"

Merida frowned. "But ah wanted ta train this one."

"I know, I know. Butâ€| looks, if you're really hel bent on this one, then we'll start trying to soften him up tomorrow. For now, let's just let him cool down."

"Aye."

* * *

><p>AN: So there you go! Hope you liked the chapter! When it came to picking the dragons for the young lords, I actually took a certain reviewer's advice. Macintosh and the Changewing seemed like a pretty good fit, Bart and the Gronkle seemed just plain obvious. As for Boyd and the Zippelback. I found it really strange, but for some reason... fitting. Hope you liked the choices. The next one will of course pick up where this one left off. **

6. How to name your dragon

Hiccup took off his mask and looked over his handy work. It had taken a few days to make it absolutely perfect, but he was finally finished. A large broad sword, forged from Gronkle iron. It would make a perfect gift for King Fergus. If he approved, then they could make even more weapons using the Gronkle Iron. He lifted the sword up and then headed for the door.

As he made his way up to the castle halls, he looked out of one of the windows and saw it was dark outside. "Oh manâ€œ!" He muttered. He hoped no one caught him in here again. Last time he got lucky because it was Merida, but if anyone else had found him, it would be trouble. He began quickening his pace.

Suddenly he saw a figure from the corner of his eye. He didn't get a good look at its face, but he would have recognized that bundle of red hair anywhere. He turned around and saw Merida smirking at him. "Ah suppose tha's the wee lil project ye been working on fer the past couple days." She asked.

He chuckled and then held up the sword. "I've already made a couple, but I wanted to make this one special. I am giving it to your dad after all." He said as she approached. "I put some Celtic designs on the hilt and flat of the blade. What do you think of it?"

She looked over the sword and ran her hands over it. "These symbols, they're so detailed. It must hae taken fer ever te craft something like this." She said impressed. "Beautiful..." She grabbed the hilt of the sword and lifted it. "â€œbut, so light. Well ah weapon like this be able te-"

"It will." Hiccup assured. "It's made from Gronkle iron. A special metal that only Gronkle can make when eating certain rocks. It's incredibly light, but it's also damn near indestructible."

Merida swung the blade through the air behind her. It was like swinging a stick. Was this really as powerful as he claimed? Well, she supposed all types of things were possible when it came to dragon, so she wouldn't question it.

She handed the weapon back to Hiccup. "So, I know I'm not supposed to be here, but I kind of lost track of time and-"

"Ah'm not gonna tell anyone." She assured. She leaned back against the wall and smiled. "Do nae let my brothers find ye though. They'd definitely blackmail ye if they found out."

Hiccup chuckled and leaned against the wall next to her. "Yeah, I saw them sneaking around the mess hall stealing snacks from everyone. I'm just glad twins aren't as clever as them. Berk would have burned to the ground by now."

She chuckled and then looked up through the window. Hiccup glanced over at her. She really was pretty, especially in the moonlight. She looked over at him and he immediately turned away. He could feel his cheeks heating up. "So, umâ€œ! what are you doing up this late?" He asked hoping she wouldn't yell at him like last time.

"Ah jist walk around the castle sometimes, when ah can nae sleep." She said simply. "Ah been up a lot lately, with all the commotion and changes goin' on around here."

Hiccup nodded. "I get what you mean. It's really hard to everyone to get used to this." He said looking up through the window. "Usually, when I get stressed out or worried, I take Toothless on a night flight. Helps clear me head, you know."

Merida looked interested. "So, what exactly is at like te fly through the air like tha?"

Hiccup smiled. "Oh man, it's amazing. When you're speeding through the air, wind flying by you, not a care in the world. It's likeâ€| freedom. I don't know if that makes any sense, but that's what it is. You don't have to worry about anything. You just live in that single moment."

She stared at him for a moment. She knew exactly what he was walking about. It was like when she rode around on Anges. She stood up and then smiled. "Let's go."

He looked confused. "Go where?"

"Flying."

"What?"

She grabbed his arm and pulled him off the wall. "Let's go get Toothless an go fer a night fly. Ah want te see whot flying is like fer myself." She said pulling him along.

Hiccup looked panicked. "Wait, hold on a second! Your father was pretty specific about not letting any of the dragon fly around. And after the last incident, I really don't think that-

"Are ye always such a pessimist?" She asked. "C'mon, we'll jist go on a quick fly around the castle an land. Nobody will even be able te see us while we're ridin' on Toothless."

He knew she had a point, but he still didn't think this was a good idea. He looked up at Merida who was smiling at him. He rubbed the back of his head and sighed. "A quick flight." She quickly began making her way to the stables, pulling Hiccup along with her.

Once they got down to the stables, they saw two guards standing there. "Ah though they'd be asleep by nowâ€|" Merida muttered.

"You know, the guards tend to sleep a lot around here." Hiccup commented.

Merida smirked. "Do nae worry aboot it. This is easy te deal with." She said before turning around. "Alright boys, c'mon out."

Hiccup looked confused. Who was she talking to? Suddenly three little red heads ran out from around the corner. They stopped in front of Merida and smiled. Hiccup looked up at her. "Were they following us the whole time?" He asked.

"Nae the whole time. They started following us when we passed the

kitchen." She said kneeling down. "Alright boys, if ye go distract the guards, ah'll give ye my sweets fer a month."

They all looked at one another, and then back to their sister before crossing their arms. "Nae, we want somethin' else." Hamish said.

Merida raised her eyebrow. "Whot?"

Hubert turned to Hiccup. "We want te see a dragon."

She looked surprised, and then turned to Hiccup. He looked down at the triplets. "Uhâ€|. I may be able to pull some stringsâ€|" He then had an idea. "In fact, I have three little dragons that'd be just perfect for you guys."

The three smiled widely. "Alright then, go get the guards away from tha stable, an we'll let ye see the dragons tomorrow during trainin'. Sound fair?" Merida asked.

"Deal." The three said running towards the guards.

Hiccup looked on interested in how the three would managed to get the guards away. He saw one of them run by and knock both of the guard's feet from under them. The two guards got up and began looking around. Hiccup could see the other two making shadows with their fingers.

Hamish, at least he thought it Hamish, was making a strange sound with his mouth. Hiccup recognized it as a Terrible Terror cry. "One of em escaped!"

"It's jist tha small one! Let's get it before someone notices!"

They ran off after the shadow and the triplets scurried off leading them away. Hiccup looked impressed. It wasn't easy learning dragon calls, but they had managed to mimic the terrible terror perfectly. "Wow, those three areâ€| curious."

"Wee little devils they are. But there ma brothers, an ah love em." She said smiling. "Now come on, this is our chance." She said pulling him along.

They approached the stabled and Hiccup unlocked it with his key. "Wait here." He made his way inside and went to Toothless stable. Hiccup unlocked the stable as quietly as possible. If they saw him taking out Toothless, they'd want out too. "Pssst, Toothless, wake up buddy." He whispered.

The black dragon opened slowly opened his eyes, and perked up once he saw his rider. It ran towards him and nuzzled his chest. "You up for a little midnight flight?" He asked. Toothless nodded excitedly. Aside from the Skrill incident, it had been weeks since they'd been flying, and he wanted nothing more than to stretch his wings.

Hiccup led him outside where he saw Merida. Toothless walked over and nuzzled her as well, happy for any friendly interaction. "Ye big baby!" She said scratching under his chin.

Hiccup walked beside Toothless and then climbed onto his back. "Okay

bud, Merida is going to come along with us this time." He said holding his hand out towards the redhead. She took it and he helped her onto his back. "So, I want you to take it slow tonight, got it?"

Merida scoffed. "Are ye kiddin' me? Ah did nae want te come so ye could jist half ass yer way through tha sky. Show me what ye can really doo Toothless!" She said smiling.

Hiccup saw the mischievous look in Toothless eyes. "Wait, hold on a second-" Toothless took off into the air with blinding speed. Merida grabbed onto the back of Hiccup's shirt struggling to hold on. Toothless stopped for a moment, and she managed to wrap her arms around Hiccup.

The Nightfury then began diving downwards and spinning. "Toothless! Knock it off!" Hiccup shouted. Merida clung to Hiccup tightly. Her heart was beating out of her chest. This was insane, and incredibly dangerous. But it was also a huge adrenaline rush.

She began laughing, and Hiccup looked back at her. "This is a blast!" Toothless spread his wings stopping the free fall a few feet from the ground. He headed back up into the air and began spinning around and doing loops.

"Show off." Hiccup said smirking.

Merida smiled. "Shoot a fire blast!"

Hiccup looked down towards the castle. Deciding that they were far enough away, he looked down at Toothless and smiled. "Well, we wouldn't want to disappoint the princess. Toothless, plasma blast!" The dragon opened his mouth and Merida heard a loud screech before a ball of blue shot from his mouth.

It flew forward and then exploded into a bright blue light. Merida laughed. "That was amazing! Can he do it again?!" She asked.

"He can only shoot six times, and I don't like wasting too many shots." Hiccup explained. She nodded in understanding. "But, I guess just one more wouldn't hurt. Toothless."

He shot another one off, and Merida looked ecstatic. She looked up at the sky and grew wide eyed. The star filled sky was always beautiful, but from up here, it was even more so. "This is tha most amazing thing ah've ever seen."

"Better than a Clydesdale, huh?" Hiccup asked smirking.

She smirked back. "Close second." Toothless grunted. "Aw, don't be like tha Toothless. Aside from Anges, yer my favorite steed." She said giggling. The dragon seemed satisfied with the praise, and kept flying forward. They continued to soar through the skies, enjoying the view of the highlands.

* * *

><p>After some time, they decided to land in a small clearing. Merida was laid out on the ground, and Hiccup was leaning against a tree drawing in a sketch book. Merida could still feel the adrenaline

rushing through her body. She wanted nothing more now than to tame that Skrill so she could go flying herself now. She glanced over at Hiccup. "So, ye get ye to do tha' all the time?" She asked.<p>

"Well, not lately. But most of the time." He said still scribbling down in his book.

"Ah can nae wait to tame me own dragon." She said happily. She then noticed the book in his hands and looked at him curious. "Wha are ye drawing?"

He looked up a bit surprised. "Oh, I as just drawing a map out. I'm not too familiar with the highlands, so I figured a map might come in handy."

She got up and began walking towards him. "A map? There's nae way ye could draw a map from what we saw up there. It's night, and we were movin' so fast an doin's so many flips and tricks ye could barely see straight."

"Of course I couldn't see everything, just enough to make a rough sketch."

Merida moved beside him to get a look at the book, and Hiccup could feel his cheeks heating up. Their bodies were closer, and their faces touching now. "Ye drew all this?" She asked.

He nodded. "Yeah."

"This is amazing. It's so detailed, especially from wha little ye could see up there." She said taking the book from him. She began flipping through it and saw a number of detailed drawing and sketches. "Ye drew all of these?! Hiccup, this is amazing!"

"It's really nothing special."

She scoffed. "Yea it is! You could use these for navigation, or war strategy, or a number of others things!" She said still flipping through. There were maps from various islands and sea routes. And evenâ€¦ a picture of her. "What's this then?"

He glanced over and realized what page she was on, and then quickly reached for the book. She pulled away before he could grab it. "That's nothing!" He said.

She backed away and looked at the sketch of her. It showed her holding a bow, aiming an arrow towards a target. It was just as detailed as the rest of his work, right down to the curls of her hair. "When did ye do this?" She asked.

Hiccup fiddled with his thumbs. "About a week ago. I saw you and the others practicing in the courtyard." He said. "I was going to draw them too, butâ€¦ I guess seeing you with that bow and arrow just grabbed all my attention. I mean, you're amazing with that thing."

Merida smiled. "Yer pretty amazin' yerself ye know."

He looked surprised by the comment. "What? No I'm notâ€¦"

She snorted. "Are ye kiddin' me? Ye tame and fight dragons, yer an expert blacksmith, ye saved yer village countless times, an ye have amazing drawing skills. Ye have ta be one of the most amazin' people ah ever met."

He looked surprised. "I guess I never thought about all that stuff."

"How could ye nae? No one on earth could ever claim to have done wit ye did. If any of my suitors had been half as amazin' as ye are, ah might have actually picked one." Hiccup blushed. Merida realized what she'd said and then blushed herself. "Ah mean-! Ahâ€| ahâ€|"

The two stood in an awkward silence. "Soâ€| you wanna head back?"

"Yes!" Merida said quickly.

"Toothless!" Hiccup called. The dragon made his way over and then eyed the two curiously. He could sense the nervousness between them. Hiccup got on and then helped Merida up. She hesitant wrapped her arms around him. "Okay Toothless, let's get back. Quickly."

He took off headed back tot eh castle.

* * *

><p>Everyone was once again crowded around the stables. Not a soul wanted to miss what was going to happen today. Dragon taming. Some of them hadn't even gotten the chance to see the dragons up close yet, and even those who did wanted to see for themselves if these things could really be tamed.<p>

Gobber walked in front of the group of teens smiling. "Today we'll be workin on how te tame yer own dragon." He explained. "Ah'm going te let loose a group of tamed dragons, of all species. There's a fish rite there fer ye te take. Ye need to try an bond with the dragon, and then feed it. That'll start a bond of trust between ye and the dragon."

Hiccup and the others Viking teens stood off to the side. They obviously didn't need to participate in this, but Gobber wanted them close by in case any of the dragon snapped. Hiccup and Merida had to convince the boys to wait later to tame their own dragons. They knew Fergus would have to be convinced that it was safe for them.

Hiccup had also tried to convince Merida to pick another dragon besides the Skrill, but the girl remained headstrong. Gobber opened the door, and the crowd watched eagerly. Ian picked up a fish and walked over towards the Changewing he had seen yesterday. The other young lords made the way to the ones they had met as well.

Ian hesitantly held out the fish. "Alright then ye, jist don't take me fingers offâ€|" He said holding his hand out. The Changewing sniffed as his hand, and then took the fish. Ian looked up surprised and then chuckled. "Heh, he took it."

The Gronkle took the fish from Bart easily enough. Boyd held his fish to the Zippleback, but the two heads began snapping at one another.

Hiccup handed him another fish, and the heads settled down and took them. "Well, tha' was easy enough." Gobber said a bit surprised.

"Well, ah must be a natural." Ian said sticking his chest out. Merida elbowed him and then nodded towards Hiccup. Ian looked at Hiccup with a strange stare. It wasn't the usual look of disgust or anger, but it wasn't exactly friendly either. Somewhere in between. "An we may have had a lil help."

"Hiccup helped us yesterday." Merida said.

"Tha so." Gobber said smiling towards his apprentice. "Well then, would ye like te choose yer dragon now princess?"

"My dragons inside." Merida said smirking.

Gobber looked confused, while Hiccup sighed. "Pardon me Princess?"

"Ah said me dragons inside tha' stable." She repeated. "The Skrill."

A few gasp came from the crowd, all of them Vikings. The Scots all looked confused. Hiccup walked over to the redhead. "Merida, please reconsider this."

"Jist trust me Hiccup. Ah can tame tha' thing." Merida said.

He looked over towards the stable, and then glance at Gobber who looked confused. Hiccup turned back to Merida who had a look on confidence on her face. He sighed and then walked towards the stable. "Gobber, would you let Toothless out please?" He asked.

Gobber looked hesitant. He glanced towards Fergus and Stoic. Both of them shared a glance, and then nodded. Gobber walked inside and a few seconds later Toothless came running out, immediately making his way to Hiccup. He jumped around him eagerly, hoping for another flight. "Not now buddy, I just want you to be ready just in case."

Hiccup opened the door of the stable once more, and then made his way back inside. The crowd was dead silent, half confused as to what Hiccup was up to, and half wondering if he would actually do it. A flash of light was seen, and Hiccup quickly came backing out of the stable. He held his hand up defensively. "Whoa, whoa, whoa!"

The Skrill came walking out, glaring at Hiccup angrily. Everyone tensed up at the sight of the vicious dragon. It kept stalking towards Hiccup. It looked ready to lunge at him, until Merida stepped forward and clapped her hands. "Hey! Over here!" She called. It whipped its head around and glared at her. "Remember me?" Merida asked smirking.

The Skrill looked back and forth between Hiccup and Merida. "Well, ain't ye hungry?" Merida said holding up a fish. "Ah got yer dinner rite here." It stared at the fish for a few moments, glanced at Hiccup one last time, and began moving towards Merida. "There we go."

It walked towards her, and Merida could feel static tingling on her

skin. It leaned towards her and sniffed the fish, and then glared at Merida. She scoffed. "Whot's wit tha' look? Ah did nae poison it." She said offended. It gave a lot growl, and then reached up and snapped the fish from her hands.

As it gobbled down the fish, Merida held her hand out. "Okay, ah gave ye yer snack. Now how aboot ye hist give me yer snout and—" The Skrill raised up so it was towering over her, and then gave a loud roar. Everyone cringed and covered their ears.

"Merida!" Fergus shouted grabbing his sword. Stoic raised his hand stopping him. Fergus glared, but sheathed his sword. He never let go of the hilt however. He was ready to charge at a moment's notice.

Hiccup looked intrigued. He was sure the Skrill would have attack by now, but it just seemed to beâ€¦ wary. Like it was curious, but cautious about the redhead girl.

Merida uncovered her ears and then looked up into the glaring eyes of the Skrill. She balled her fist up and then glared right back. "Are ye done?" She asked. She held her hands up towards it, and it back up for a moment. "Oh stop being a baby an jist give me yer snout!"

It narrowed its eyes at her, and then slowly leaned forward until his nose was touching her hand. Merida's hair began floating upwards. "No wayâ€|" Astrid said amazed.

"That's impossible. I thought the Skrill was untamable." Fishlegs said.

Merida reached under its chin and scratched. "See, ah told ye ah could do it." She said patting the Skrill on the head. Hiccup walked towards Merida, and the Skrill snarled at him. He quickly backed away. Merida rolled her eyes. "He's nae gonna hurt ye either. Jist relax."

Fergus finally let go of his sword, and Eleanor let out a sigh of relief. The triplets ran past the fence and headed towards their sister. The Skrill looked confused as the boys began jumping and crawling all of them. It looked irritated, but Merida ran a hand over its head. "Ye get use to them." She explained.

Hiccup slowly approached, and while the Skrill glared at him, it didn't attack. "I don't believe it. You actually tamed the Skrill. No one's ever been able to do that before."

Merida smiled proudly. "Well, ah guess ah'm even better than tha' dragon conqueror eh?"

Hiccup just smirked and shook his head. Gobber approached them. "Well yer majesty, now that ye have all chosen a dragon, it's time ye pick their names."

The young lords all looked like they were in thought. Bart reached up and rubbed his Gronkle's stomach. "Craig." He said smiling.

Ian looked over as his Changewing and eyed it closely. He reached out and then stroked it's snout. "Ah'm gonna call himâ€| Ninian."

The two Zippleback heads looked down at Boyd who seemed lost. "Umâ€| do ah have te name them both?" He asked turning to Gobber. The black smith just shrugged. "Ah think ah'll name himâ€| Cinaed."

"Good names. An whot about you princess?" Gobber said. "Whot's his name?"

Merida smiled and wrapped her arms around the Skrill. "It's a her." She clarified. They looked at her confused. Before they could even ask how she knew, she spoke up. "Women's intuition." She explained. "Ah suppose ah'll name herâ€| Sorcha."

"Great. I'll start working on saddles, then we can work on flying. Until then, try bonding a little more with your dragons. The closer you are, the better." Hiccup said. He pulled out the book of dragons and then handed it to Ian. "This book contains everything we've recorded on the dragons. If there's anything you want to know about yours, it should be in there."

Ian looked over the book and then up at Hiccup. "Uhâ€| thank ye." He said. Hiccup nodded and turned to walk away, but Ian grabbed his shoulder. "Thank yeâ€| Hiccup, rite?"

Hiccup was a bit surprised. "Yeah. And no problem."

Merida walked up to Hiccup. "Ah'll talk to me da aboot letting the dragons out."

"Thanks. By the way, it may take a little longer to work on your saddle." Hiccup said. "Skrill are always shooting out lighting, so I'll have to find a insulated material to use."

She nodded and then turned toward Sorcha. The triplets were keeping her busy. "Ah'll also try te get Sorcha to lighten up on ye." She said elbowing him lightly.

Hiccup chuckled and then headed off towards the smithy. The rest of the Viking teens were approaching the young lords. Fishlegs was giving Gronkle facts to Bart, the twins were saying god knows what to Boyd, and Snotlout seemed to be arguing with Ian over who's dragon was better. "You really are getting cozy with the princess huh?"

He turned and saw Astrid smirking at him. "What? No, I was just-"

"I know about your little midnight flight." She said crossing her arms.

Hiccup blushed. "She just wanted to ride a dragon, that's all."

Astrid chuckled. "Sure she did. Just be careful lover boy. You might end up next in line for the throne by the time the war's over." She said jokingly.

Hiccup glanced back at Merida. She was laughing as she watched Fergus pulling his finger back after being shocked by Sorcha. She really was pretty. He shook his head and then turned back to Astrid who had an amused look on her face. "Iâ€| uhâ€|" He groaned and then walked towards the smithy.

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><p>AN: Okay, another update! I got a few reviews saying I should focus a bit more on the romance, so I decided to start off the chapter with a little midnight flight. **

**As for the dragons names, I looked up some Scottish names and meanings. Craig means 'Rock', which I saw as fitting since Gronkle's are tough, sturdy, and... eat rocks. **

**Ninian mean 'Unknown'. Since Changewings can blend in and are part of the Mystery class, I thought it was a good fit. **

**Cinaed means 'Born of fire'. I couldn't find any names that meant double or two heads or anything, so I just decided to go with that one. **

**And finally, Sorcha means 'Radiant'. Considering that Skrill's shoot out and manipulate lightening, I thought it was a good choice. **

**Tell me what you guys think of the names, and remember, read and review!

>

7. The First Battle

Weeks had gone by since Merida and the young lords had tamed their dragons. They had spent the majority of their time bonding and learning how to fly, which most of them seemed to get the hang off. As promised Merida had convinced her father to let the dragons out of their stables.

Fergus was a little hesitant at first, but seeing how easily his daughter managed to deal with Sorcha, who was one of the deadliest dragons known to man, seemed to ease him a bit. At first it was very awkward. People were nervous about having dragons soaring around freely.

But they were slowly starting to get used to them. The dragons helped with numerous chores around the town. Hunting, fishing, blacksmithing, and even small every day activities like hauling supplies around town. There had only been one incident when a guard stepped on Hookfang's tail, but no one was seriously injured and they agreed to let it slide.

Bart and Craig had formed the quickest bond. It wasn't really hard to please the Gronkle. A rub on the stomach and a few rocks to eat kept him happy. Bart also figured out that he seemed to have a personal liking for haggis.

Boyd didn't really have trouble getting along with Cinaed. Though it was curious as to who was looking after whom in their relationship. The main problem came from learning to fly. It was difficult for three heads to coordinate their flight patterns. Eventually he seemed to get the hang of it, and was soaring through the sky with the others.

Ian had the most difficult time adjusting to his dragon Ninian. It

wasn't like they didn't like each other, but it just took him time to get used to even having the animal around. But eventually he started to become more comfortable around him. He and Snotlout were always competing in both combat and dragon riding, and their dragons seemed to pick up on their competitiveness.

The worst however was probably the boys. Apparently Hiccup had made some deal with the triplets, and before he knew it they were whizzing around on the same dragons as Fergus. It wouldn't have been so bad if they were regular dragons, but these were pretty much their dragon counter parts. Whizzing around, screaming.

When they weren't spending time with their dragons, they were spending time training for battle. Everyone had improved greatly, even Hiccup. They had also gained quite a few fans. The younger kids always came to see them practice and ride their dragons. They had even joined in on training every now and then.

Which was why a group of young girls were crowded around Astrid and Merida, who were showing them how to properly wield a sword. "You want to make sure you have a firm grip on it, otherwise your opponent will be able to easily disarm you." Astrid explained.

"An be sure te make yer stance firm. Most of yer opponents will outweigh ye, so ye need to be able te stand firm when they parry or try te push ye back." Merida said.

The girls all nodded and mimicked their stances. Meanwhile the boys were sparing with Snotlout, Hiccup, and Ian. Ian and Hiccup watched while Snotlout was sparing with the rest of the boys. Despite him being twice their size, he didn't hold back very much. Just enough to actually harm them.

Gustav was currently charging at him with a training sword in hand. He jabbed at the older boy who easily blocked with his own sword. "Hah!" Gustav swung as hard as he could, but Snotlout easily parried. He then swung at Gustav who managed to block, but was send stumbling back.

"Not bad kid." Snotlout said twirling his own training sword in his hand. "But why don't you try this one on for size!" He said charging forward. Gustav barely managed to hold to his sword as the older Viking kept swinging away at him.

With one large swing Snotlout knocked the sword out of his hand, and it landed behind him. He looked panicked. "Ye have te hang on te yer weapon lad." Ian said shaking his head.

"Alright Gustav, you're unarmed. You have to think on your feet." Hiccup said.

Gustav and Snotlout circled around one another. He noticed Gustav eyeing his sword. "Don't try it kid." Snotlout warned. Gustav ran towards him, and Snotlout jabbed at him. Gustav however ducked and rolled past him. He grabbed his sword off the ground and turned back around just in time to parry.

Ian whistled while Hiccup clapped his hand. "Very nice. Extra points fer style." Ian said.

They heard giggling and Gustav looked over to see some of the younger girl watching him. He blushed slightly and smiled back, looking at one girl in particular. Snotlout smirked before placing his foot behind Gustav's and then pushing him over. He fell to the ground, and then found a sword pointed to his neck. "Don't get distracted."

The girls once again giggled and Gustav blushed, this time out of embarrassment. Astrid rolled her eyes. Even when training these girls were thinking about boys. "Alright girls, we've done enough for now, why don't we pick up later today. We'll practice some archery."

"Aye, by tha time ah'm done with ye, ye'll be able te shoot tha wings off a fly." Merida said confidently. The girls all nodded and began waking off.

A few of them stayed behind and were muttering something, and then the girl Gustav had been staring at broke from the group and walked over towards him. He quickly scrambled to his feet and tried to regain his composure. "Oh, hey Aileen, hah."

She smiled. "Hey Gustav. Ye looked pretty cool jist now." She said. He scratched the back of his head nervously. "Ah saw yoo with yer dragon the other day. Ah was wondering if ye could show introduce me te himâ€ or her. Ah can't really tell em apart yet."

Gustav looked stunned for a second, the Snotlout slapped him in the back of the head. He shook his head and then "Uh, yeah! I can introduce you to him, sure!" He turned around and then took a deep breath, and then yelled out. Aileen looked totally confused.

A few second passed before a large shadow appeared over them. Fanghook landed down beside the two. "Nice Monstrous Nightmare call." Hiccup said nodding.

Gustav patted Fanghook's snout. "Yep, this is Fanghook. Cool isn't he?"

Aileen walked forward and patted him. "Wow. Ah only ever seen the small baby ones up this close. Me ma will nae let me near the bigger ones. She says they're dangerous."

He waved his hand. "No way. Monstrous Nightmares are tough and fierce, but they're totally tame." As if to disprove his point, Hookfang landed down looked irritated. He glared down at Gustave and Fanghook who lowered his head at larger dragon's stare. "Oh, Hookfang. I didn't mean to call you."

Hookfang snorted sending a puff of smoke in his face. Aileen took a step back. "Tha one looks mean." She muttered to Gustav who was wiping the soot off his face.

"Alright Hookfang, let's leave the little runt alone with his girlfriend." Snotlout said signaling for his dragon to follow him. The two of them blushed but said nothing. Hookfang followed his rider to the mess hall.

"So, you want to go flying?" Gustav asked.

"Can ah?!" She asked excitedly.

Hiccup quickly cut in. "Whoa there, hold on a sec. I'm not so sure that's a good idea. You've never been flying with another person before."

Gustav gave him a pleading look. "Oh come on! I won't do any crazy stunts. I'll keep it safe, I promise." He said before looking over towards Merida. "Besides, she used to take the princes with her before they got their dragons."

Merida grew wide eyed. "Wait a minute! Where are those wee devils?!" Three blurs rushed by and they could see the triplets speeding by on Bing, Bam, and Boom. "Hey! Ah told ye te stop doing tha!" She shouted shaking her fist.

Hiccup chuckled at the sight. "Alright. But remember, no crazy stuns. A quick fly around the town, that's it." He said.

"Got it." Gustav said before jumping onto Fanghook. He held his hand out and helped Aileen on. She wrapped her arms around him and he stiffened. "O-okay. Let's go." He said before Fanghook took off into the air, joining the triplets in their flight.

Hiccup watched as they flew up higher and higher. "I pray to Odin he doesn't make me regret this." He said turning towards the others. "So, what do you guys want to do now?"

Ian yawned. "Not sure. Where in the hell are the others at? Ah never thought ah'd say this, but ah actually kind of miss Boyd and tha twins. They're crazy sure, but at least they keep things interestin'."

"Tuff, Ruff, and Boyd went on a hunting trip with Lord Dingwall. Fishlegs I think is in the library helping Bart with his accent." Astrid explained.

"Good. Maybe at least we'll start te understand tha big oaf." Ian said stretching his arms. "Ah jist wish if these Vikings were going to invade they would do it already. Ah'm getting bored."

"Do nae be so eager fer war young ones." They turned and saw the queen approaching. Everyone but Merida quickly bowed and greeted her. "Yer fathers may have told yoo stories aboot their victories and glorious moments in war, but it's unlikely they mentioned the many losses we suffered as well."

"Ah did nae mean it like tha my queen. Ah spoke out of boredom an foolishness." Ian said.

"Don't worry. Ah understand ah know how the young mind works. Ye are jist eager to prove yerself. But believe me, if ye do see battle, yer perspective will change." Eleanor said. "If we're fortunate we can find a way te avoid this war altogether."

"I don't think that's going to happen your majesty. Even if by some divine intervention we managed to come to some sort of agreement, Alvin is called treacherous for a reason." Hiccup said. "Not to mention he has Dagur with him, who is just itching for a reason to fight."

Eleanor sighed. "Ah know. Ah suppose ah'm jist hoping fer the best. The only thing we can do is pray that everything works out." She said beginning to walk off.

Gustav and Fanghook flew through the air, while Aileen held on tightly around his waist. The triplets flew beside them whizzing around them. "This is amazin." Aileen said enjoying the view.

"Yeah, never gets old." Gustav said. "Want to see the ocean view?"

"Are we supposed te fly out tha' far?"

He smirked. "We'll stay near the shore. It'll just be a quickly fly by." She looked up in thought for a moment, and then nodded.

"Alright, let's go Fanghook!"

The Monstrous Nightmare dived downwards and headed towards the docks. The princes followed after them. As they got closer, they saw a large cloud of fog out in the water. "Heh, wha's tha?" Aileen asked.

Gustav sighed. "It's probably those Smokebreaths again. Hiccup already gave them a bunch of Gronkle Iron to make their nest. Why can't they just stop causing trouble?" He said as Fanghook flew down towards the cloud. "I'm gonna send them back. Guys, mind helping me clear the fog up?" He asked looking to the triplets.

They nodded, and the dragons approached the cloud and then slowed down. Fanghook gave his wings one mighty flap, and send a huge gust of wind forward. Bing, Bam, and Boom screamed out sending sound waves. The fog was sent away, and replaced with the sight of ships, at least a dozen of them.

All of them instantly froze. Looking closer they saw that the ship was full of Vikings. Gustav recognized the flag as the Backstabber tribe's symbol. "We've been spotted! Take them out!" One of them shouted. Multiple arrows were suddenly sent flying towards the kids.

"Hookfang! Move!" All of them quickly began maneuvering around, dodging the rain of arrows sent towards them. "Up! Up! Everyone up!" They all flew upwards managing to get out of range of the arrows.

"Their attacking!" Aileen said not believing her eyes.

Gustav felt his hands shaking. This was it, the start of the war, and he was the first line of defense. He took a deep breath and tried to think. He then turned towards the princes, who still wore stunned looks on their faces. "Um, Hubert, take Aileen back and go warn the king!"

The brothers snapped out of their daze, and Hubert flew forward. Fanghook leaned over and caused Aileen to go tumbling onto Hubert and Bam. Aileen quickly balanced herself as they took off. "Wait ah second?! Wha' are ye doing?!" She yelled worriedly.

Once they were away a safe distance, Gustav gulped and looked down towards the ships. He then turned towards Harris and Hamish. "You

guys should head back too, I'm going to buy some time for the army to get ready."

They both looked at one another, and then turned back towards him, with determined looks on their faces. Gustav knew that letting the princes risk their lives was probably stupid, but honestly he was just glad he wasn't going in by himself. "Okay guys, let's go!"

The three flew down towards the ships. Once they were in range, more arrows came flying towards them. They once again began maneuvering around dodging the arrows. "Fanghook, fire it up!" The dragon reeled back and then shot a blast of fire at the mass of the lead ship. The blast easily put a gapping hole in the mass, and cause it to fall. The flaming mass fell back and landed on one of the other ships.

Harris and Hamish flew down and Bing and Boom yelled out, sending sonic blast towards the sides of one of the ships. As they flew closer to it, the intensity of the blast increased, and the ship soon tipped over. One of the ships fire a large boulder from a catapult. The boulder headed right for Gustav and Fanghook, and he didn't see it coming.

The brothers turned and had their dragons scream towards the boulder, tipping it away enough to miss Gustav. "Thanks!" He said before flying down towards another ship. "Get ready Fanghook! Fire it up!" He jumped off Fanghook's back and onto the ship. He kept running towards the other end of the ship, dodging every Viking that had tried to strike or grab him.

Fanghook lit his body on fire and then smashed through the ship. Gustav reached the other end of the ship and Fanghook burst out just in time to catch his rider before he hit the water. They flew upwards and Gustav laughed. "I can't believe that worked!"

He stopped laughing when screamed filled his ears. He looked down and saw the ship was on fire. There were people down there, burning alive. He felt a chill up his spine. He did that. He had killed, and was killing, all those people. He steeled his nerves. He had to do this. If not, they were going to do the same to him, his family and friends, and everyone else.

Harris and Hamish upturned another ship, and were working on a third. More arrows were flying towards them, but they soar out of the way as quickly as possible. One of the Vikings turned towards the leader of the attack. "Sir, what should we do? Our cover is already blown. Should we just retreat?"

The leader balled his fist up and turned towards him with fury in his eyes. "I will not retreat from mere children!" He shouted. "I want them shot down, now!"

Another boulder was fired, and Gustav quickly urged Fanghook to move. They did, but the boulder hit Fanghook's wing. Gustav was knocked off his back and the two fell towards the water. Hamish and Harris moved to catch Gustav, but more arrows were fired and they found themselves dodging for their lives.

Gustav braced himself the impact, but suddenly felt an arm around his waist. He looked up and then saw Snotlout who was flying on Hookfang.

"Snotlout!" He looked over and saw Bart and Craig who had caught Fanghook and were carrying him back to shore.

Snotlout set Gustav behind him. "Don't worry, I think he's just a little shaken." He said. "So, you took out four ships by yourself. Seems like you really were learning from me."

"Yeah, leaning how to be reckless an stupid!" Astrid said flying beside him.

"Sometimes reckless is good." Hiccup said joining the two. "Still, we'll take it from here Gustav."

Merida flew up beside her brothers with a frown. "Are ye two crazy?! Ye could have gotten yerselvs killed! Mum is gonna punish ye for weeks!" The two looked down nervously. Merida would get angry at her brothers from time to time, but she rarely got furious with them. Only when they put themselves in danger did she really let loose on them.

Ian flew up beside them. "Do nae be two hard on em. They did nae do anythin' ye wouldn't have done yerself." He reasoned.

Merida sighed. "Ah suppose yer rite. But mum will still kill ye." She said before turning around on Sorcha. "Ye two stay up here. Let's finish these lot Ian."

They flew down towards the remaining ships who started to fire at them. Ian flew down and Ninian flew down towards one ship, and Ninian shot acid at the mass. It quickly melted through, the mass fell over landing on another ship. "Nice one!" Fishlegs said as he and Meatlug flew down and smashed the remainder of the ship in half.

The ship with the catapults was about to fire again, but Snotlout flew down towards it. "Alright, let's fire it up!" He yelled smirking.

"Hey!" Gustav shouted.

Hookfang shot out a blast of fire, setting the top of the ship ablaze. Merida came down behind him and Sorcha charged some lightening. She blasted at the flaming ship, and once the lightening hit the ship exploded. There were chips of wood and amour flying everywhere. "Whoaâ€!" Merida said amazed.

"Fire and lightening combo! Gotta remember that one princess!" Snotlout said excitedly.

Astrid and Stormfly land on another of the ships, and the latter flung her tails cutting the ropes of the sails and causing them to fall. They turned around and shot a blast of fire, setting the front half of it ablaze. Astrid spotted the leader on the ground rubbing his head, and smiled. "Stormfly, fetch."

The dragon leaped forward and grabbed the leader before taking off into the air. "We're gonna bring this one back to the king, you can handle the rest without us right?" She asked.

"We got it!" Hiccup said sailing down towards the last two ships. "Toothless, let's take em out." They dived down and Toothless fired

two plasma blast from his mouth, blowing huge holes in both ships. They quickly began sinking into the water.

They heard a loud horn go off, and everyone turned around to see the boats of the clans approaching. Fergus whistled at what he saw. A dozen of the enemy's ships completely destroyed, by children. "By god, those creatures really are amazin'." He then looked up and saw Harris and Hamish. "Bloody hell! Boys, get down here!"

They quickly flew down to the ship, and Fergus snatch them off their dragons before they could even land. He pulled them into a huge. "Ah was worried te death when Hubert came back without ye." He said before setting them down. He turned towards the others. "Ye all head back te shore. We'll pick up tha survivors an take them te tha dungeons."

* * *

><p>AN: In the middle of writing this author's note, my brother screwed around and refreshed the page. I don't want to retype it all over again. I'm going to kill him. Maybe you'll see me on the news.**

End
file.